

GIVE ME BACK



MARGARET THRASHER
SEASICK

ULTRA DOLPHINS

NO AGE

PUNK SOUND
ENGINEERS

ISSUE #3

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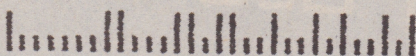
We're always looking for new diy punk records, books and zines. If you just put something out, send us a copy to check out. Just please don't send us stuff with pre-printed barcodes on the cover.

That shit is busted.

THE NEXT DEADLINE IS
MARCH 1ST



MAIL



Dear Fil,

Here's some more stuff to review. Sorry it's not much this time (ha ha, that's a joke).

Please review it yourself, or give to a reviewer who will actually listen to it before writing the review.

As for the zine reviews, are your zine reviewers competing with MRR zine reviewers to see who can be more cynical? Maybe my zine really is that bad? It can't be if [it] got an okay review in MRR. WTF?

Oh well.

Thanks, and keep up the good work.

Todi

(and others from Sharpie Fumes Collective)

Dear Todi,

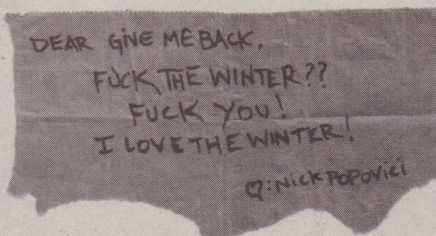
First of all, thanks for writing. The main goal of this project is communication and I encourage anyone reading this to participate. If you think your band or zine got an unfair review, or if some band or columnist says something that pisses you off or inspires you in some way, write us a letter. A real letter. Even if you just think an issue is boring or stupid, get out a pen or a typewriter and speak up. It'll keep us in check and force you to articulate your opinions. We're always open to criticism, constructive or otherwise.

At the same time, be prepared to defend yourself. As much as I love the argument that bad reviews are the result of lazy or cynical reviewers, you should be able to back that shit up. I don't know if the "but some other punk thought it was okay" argument really helps your case.

I'm looking at the review of your zine, *If Death Comes... #4*, and the harshest thing I can find is in the last sentence which says "over all it's just a downer to read about insecurities and discontent without any of the insights that would make the stories interesting." They're not saying "this sucks, give up." They're saying that you could do better. Personally, I'd rather get that kind of honest feedback than the shrug of "meh, it's okay."

It's very possible that some of our reviewers could be full of shit. They're just punks like you and me. They have names and can be held accountable for what they say, but if you want to challenge them, you've got to put up a fight.

- Fil



STUFF WE'RE INTO

Meghan Minior

BAADER BRAINS • The Complete Unfinished Works of the Young Tigers LP
POISON CONTROL • The Violent Years 7"
REDWING BLACKBIRD • CD
GOVERNMENT WARNING • Arrested 7" and live
THE CONVERSIONS • Prisoners' Inventions LP
IRON LUNG/HATRED SURGE/MIND ERASER/SCAPEGOAT • live @ the ratcellar
AEROSOLS • 7" and live
MENEQUAR • Strangers In Our House LP
THURSTON MOORE • Trees Outside the Academy, LP
CARBONAS • LP

Fil

Three Records #1 by Chrissy Piper
CRISCO THUNDER & THE DISECTION SOCIETY • demo
FUTURE VIRGINS • 7"
ACTS OF SEDITION • Crown Victoria EP
HEY GIRL! • 12"
THE NOJONS • "California 1983"
AEROSOLS • 7"
SLEEPYTIME TRIO and ACTION PATROL • live
DANIEL HIGGS • live
MRR Radio and Sonic Overload

Gabriela Halasova

LOSER LIFE • I have ghosts 12"
GO IT ALONE • Histories LP
GO IT ALONE • Love 7"
JAY REATARD • Blood Visions
THIS IS MY FIST • A History of Rats 12"
MIND ERASER • Glacial Reign LP
MINDLESS MUTANT • 7"
LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT • 4 song EP
SCREAMING FEMALES • 2nd LP
IN STRIDE • 7"

Mark McCoy

THE JAMES BOYS • Shoo Shoo/Hello Hello 7"
WALD GEIST WINTER • Siegreich ist das Eis tape
UNHOLY CRUCIFIX • Everything
UAIY BAAIOHOIO • EP
MARE • Throne of the Thirteenth Witch EP
BEFOUL • At The Devil's Mass tape
SOUMESTA SAATANALLE Compilation LP
DEATHKEY • Totenkopf 2 x CDR
ANIMAL COLLECTIVE • Strawberry Jam
Teeter Sperber's Bubblegum Mix

Stephen Pierce

FUTURE VIRGINS • Both EPs
TILT WHEEL & DEAR LANDLORD • live @ Fest
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CARNAL KNOWLEDGE & NASTY INTENTIONS & DEAD DOG & STUPID PARTY
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BLOTTO/DRUNKEN BOAT • split 7"
THE MISCASTS • Days of Losing Tickets 7"
The 131 Tompkins Cultural Center

Beck Levy

PJ HARVEY • White Chalk CD
Nobody Belongs Here More Than You by Miranda July
Adulterers Anonymous by Lydia Lunch & Exene Cervenka
Adaptive Behavior Part Three zine
PIZZA • live & demo
JESU • live w/torche
TEENAGE JESUS & THE JERKS • everything cd
LOVE LIFE • The Rose He Lied By CD
Sam McPheeters' flickr page
THE CRANBERRIES • Everybody Else Is Doing It... CD

Greg Harvester

DORY TOURETTE AND THE SKIRTHEADS • LP
(R.I.P. Dory)
THE MONOTONIX • live
TEENAGE WAISTBAND • I Saw What I Wanted to See tape
SHELLSHAG • Destroy Me. I'm Yours LP
Dishwasher by Pete Jordan
HIDDEN SPOTS • Important Transmissions 7"
RED HERRING • Housing Crisis EP
BLACK RAINBOW • tape
MARKED MEN • live
LANDLORD • No Matter Where You Live CD



No AGE

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Special thanks to:

Ebullition, No Ideal, Microcosm, Alternative Tentacles, Dischord, and all the bands and punks who help with distribution

GIVE ME BACK
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Washington, DC
20056

the third issue

Before we even started working on our first issue, I wrote a short announcement, almost like a mission statement, talking about why I think projects like these are important. It was basically in response to the thought of another zine disappearing, leaving us with even fewer alternatives for communication outside of the internet. To paraphrase, my main point was that while I understand that things like message boards, social networking websites, and blogs serve a purpose*, we can't rely on them. They're not substitutes for the relationships that exist in real life or the tangible shit that we can hold in our hands. We need physical documents, not only to connect us now, on our own terms, but to preserve our history. A paper trail with names and faces.

Someone pointed out to me that in the last issue, every interview included some mention or discussion of MySpace. It seems almost inescapable at the moment, so I guess it's worth talking about. In the column section in this issue, we have a guest column that presents a detailed argument against punk-support of that website. I think it brings up a lot of important points. Maybe you'll disagree, but it's at least worth thinking about. Then do whatever you want, because, like anything else, you have to live your own life and make your own decisions.

While I think my opinion on that topic is pretty clear, I don't really give a shit about what you do on the internet. I'm more interested in what you do in real life. Keep making zines. Keep writing letters. Keep making bad-ass flyers. Keep heckling the jackasses who take up too much space. Keep pushing yourself and each other to do things that you didn't know you could do. And keep questioning everything.

Punk might not be dead, but it's starting to get pretty fucking old. It's up to all of us to keep it exciting, challenging, and fun. When it gets boring or macho or stupid, we have the capacity and the responsibility to change it. As one interview here mentions, it is what we say it is.

xoxo,
 fil

P.S. Also in this issue, there's another sweet guest column about how to legally play DIY shows in Canada, so check that shit out, too.

* To be honest, I don't actually know what that purpose is. I'm just trying to be diplomatic.



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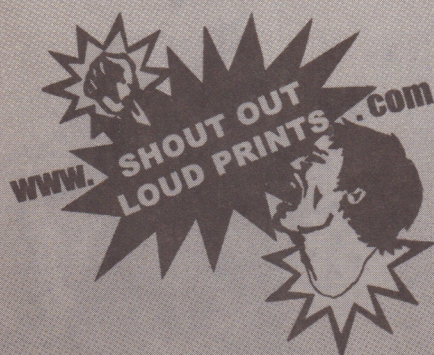


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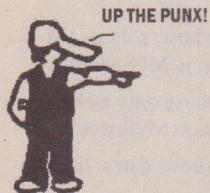


Short documentaries by Joe Biel about bikes, trains, dogs, patches, and the board game RISK. Fun, impacting, historical, and somehow socially relevant. City planning and transportation people seem to love it. 94 minutes \$12

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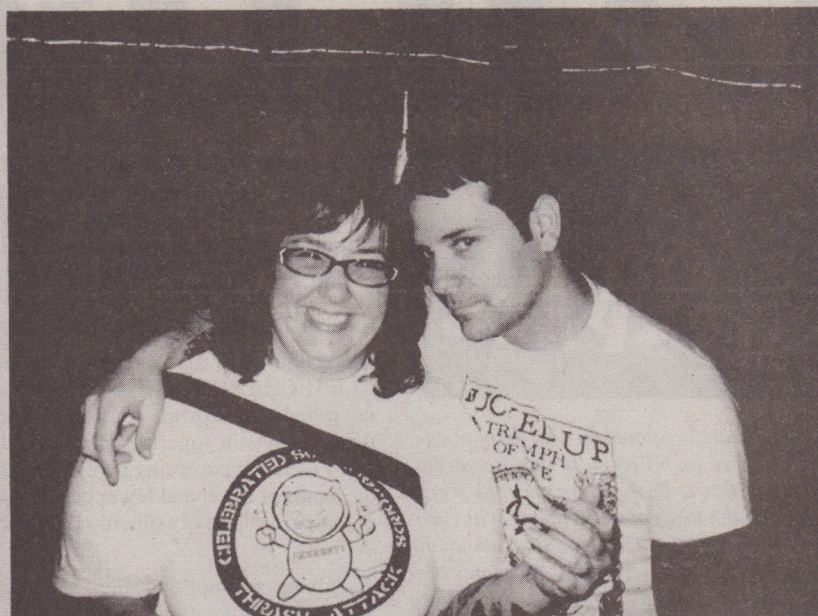
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COLUMNS

Guest Column:

THE ABC'S OF FUCK MYSPACE

Hello, my name is Spoonboy and I am not on MySpace. I've found recently that it's an unpopular position to be in within the punk scene. I wrote a rough draft of what I hope will eventually be an informative pamphlet about the website, and distributed about 500 copies of it at the Fest in Gainesville. Since then, I've been gathering constructive criticism and maybe you can help with the peer editing process. Here's a somewhat condensed version of the rough draft, so let me know what you think.

THE ABC'S OF FUCK MYSPACE

It's just a website, so what's so bad about it? Let's start here: If you agree with any of the following statements there's nothing more for me to say to you. We can agree to disagree and you can stop reading now. Let's try it out:

- Right wing corporate control of the media is a safe and non-threatening state of affairs.
- Homogenization of the Internet for the sake of convenience is the necessary wave of future.
- "Everybody's doing it," is a reasonable criterion, even within punk, to base one's actions on.

I know some people have ideas about punk that exist completely outside of any radical critique of our culture. BUT if you passed that little screening you're probably something like me. For you, punk is at the very least a means of challenging conformity, if not a radical critique of the status quo. Based on that common ground, I'd like to make an appeal for a punk-wide migration from the website.

MONEY IN THE POCKET OF THE NEWS CORPORATION

The first and most flagrantly offensive thing about MySpace is who is behind it. MySpace is owned by a huge media conglomerate called the NEWS CORPORATION. News Corporation is an umbrella company that owns over 200 media outlets, including 43 newspaper companies, 34 magazines, 29 movie and television studios, 34 websites, and 72 television channels. Among those companies are the HARPERCOLLINS book publishing compa-

ny, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, the FOX BROADCASTING COMPANY, and the FOX NEWS CHANNEL. A man named Rupert Murdoch, a staunch supporter and financial contributor to the Republican Party, owns this corporation. NEWS CORPORATION makes roughly 25 BILLION DOLLARS a year.

Along with other right wing conglomerates like CLEARCHANNEL, News Corporation is leading a trend towards the consolidation of major media outlets in America. This, of course, is a scary idea. We are seeing public information in the hands of fewer and fewer people, and many of these people have explicitly right wing agendas.

A shining example of this phenomenon is the News Corporation's pet TV station: FOX NEWS CHANNEL. I recommend a documentary called OUTFOXED, which illustrates the ways that Fox News has manipulated its standing in the media to push Republican talking points. To quickly illustrate the Fox News Channel's impact on politics, I'd like to offer an anecdote you may or may not have heard about. In the 2000 Presidential Elections, as you probably remember, the vote between George Bush and Al Gore came down to the controversial Florida election results. On election night, as the results were still being counted, Fox News's analyst in Florida called the election for George W. Bush, prompting all the other major news outlets to fall in line within minutes. And who was Fox News's Voter Analyst? His name is John Prescott Ellis, and he is George W. Bush's first cousin. There are strong arguments that the distorted perception created of George W. Bush as victor had more to do with him becoming President than any voter recounts or Supreme Court decisions.

The point here isn't just "George Bush=bad"; the point is that people like George Bush are placed into positions of power by corporate manipulation of the media. This is just one of examples of how Rupert Murdoch's media juggernaut is influencing the world in a dark and manipulative way, and a small taste of what MySpace's proprietor is all about.

So you're thinking, "I get it. News Corporation is an evil right wing propaganda machine. What does this have to do with me?"

Well, here's the breakdown: MySpace makes its money from advertisers. Advertising rates are based on the number of hits a website gets. In other words, they are based on the popularity of the website. As I mentioned already, MySpace is THE most popular website on the Internet. A lot of people tell me "I don't click on the advertisements! I'm just using a free website!

I'm not contributing to MySpace financially!" This is not true. EVEN IF YOU DO NOT CLICK ON THE ADVERTISEMENTS, YOU ARE MAKING MONEY FOR MYSPACE. By visiting the website you increase the number of hits and increase the advertising rates. By visiting the website you are making money for the NEWS CORPORATION and, by extension, RUPERT MURDOCH. Effectively, BY VISITING THE WEBSITE YOU ARE CONTRIBUTING TO CAMPAIGN FINANCES OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, and one of the world's leading advocates for right wing corporate control over world politics.

THE CULTURE OF MYSPACE

Now you're thinking, "What can I do? I'm just one person! Surely my clicks aren't making a difference." Maybe not a big difference, but look what's already happened: There is a culture of MySpace. It's perpetuated as an exclusive channel for communication, and most of the punks, unthinking or not, are participating in it.

How many of the following things sound familiar?

- Do you know anyone whose sole or primary contact information is MySpace?
- Do you know of bands whose only website or contact information is on MySpace?
- How about tours and show dates listed only on MySpace?
- Have you seen shows or events promoted exclusively through MySpace?
- What about bands who book their entire tours through the website?

Unfortunately, these things are starting to typify the punk experience. As someone who plays in a band, I've experienced it over and over again. When someone wants your contact information, they assume you have a MySpace website. It's become the de facto contact info for punk bands in a culture that's relying more and more on digital communication. I recently saw a band whose involvement in DIY hardcore predates MySpace by years and years get up on stage and profess how the website was "saving the scene."

The website is purposefully structured to create exclusivity. If you want to contact someone who uses MySpace, you cannot do so without you yourself also signing up for a MySpace account. It's a spiral effect. The more people there are who use the website, the harder it is to be in touch with people without signing up for the website yourself, and the harder it is to be

a part of certain communities without getting involved with the website.

The realistic effect that this monopolization of band contact information creates is that the majority of THE PUNK COMMUNITY IS RALLYING AROUND A WEBSITE THAT GIVES MAJOR FINANCIAL BACKING TO THE MOST RIGHT WING MEDIA OUTLETS AND POLITICIANS. Again, I understand that everybody's definition of punk is different, but for me, that just doesn't add up.

"BUT IT'S SO EASY!" SO IS WAL-MART.

Let's address some common defenses of MySpace.

The most common sentiment that I've heard voiced is, basically: "It's just so convenient." Compared to other archival websites and social networking websites, MySpace is actually very poorly designed and difficult to use. But the fact is, since everyone uses it, it's the most convenient way to network with the largest amounts of people. Yes. That's convenient. Should convenience be priority #1?

I could wax about how laziness is THE human condition that is most consistently appealed to in efforts to maintain the status quo. Instead, let me offer an analogy:

What's another corporate outlet, where you can get everything you'd ever possibly need in one place? You guessed it!

WAL-MART!

In my experience, most punks are somewhat familiar with the labor practices and monopolizing efforts of Wal-Mart. Most punks that I know have a basic understanding that supporting Wal-Mart is a no-no. Does that mean that no one I know ever shops there? No. But you would never see Wal-Mart advertised on the back of nearly every punk CD like you do with MySpace. The argument for convenience would never stand up against the evidence of social destruction caused by Wal-Mart, so why do we let it slide for MySpace?

Another similarity to Wal-Mart: Much like the homogenized landscape that Wal-Mart has helped build in America (through the repetition of identical strip malls all across the country), MySpace has homogenized the landscape of the internet. Think about it: The possibilities for band websites are as vast as the Internet itself, yet the majority of bands settle for the exact same cookie cutter design with maybe a change of background. Isn't punk about sticking it out and doing something different?

OK, now I can hear the second most common defense coming to the surface. "I don't know how to design a website, so this is the only way for me to get my music out there." I can sympathize. I don't know the first thing about website design. I have some friends that do, but not everyone is so lucky. That still doesn't lead to an argument for MySpace. There are plenty of other websites that you can host homepages on that carry a fraction of the political impact that MySpace does. Furthermore, since when have punks had such a defeatist attitude?

Where's the DIY ethic? DIY punk has always prided itself for existing outside of corporate media channels, such as major record labels and clubs. Doesn't the punk line go: "We don't need those corporate record labels! We'll start our own!" Where is that fire when it comes to learning how to design your own webpage?

Finally, I'll hear the MySpace defender resort to the defense of, "Well, everybody's doing it."

I've heard explicitly anarchist bands defend their participation in MySpace by citing other anarchist bands that use it. That kind of deflection of responsibility is ludicrous. Hasn't punk always been a rejection of conformity? The day that "everybody does it" become a legitimate excuse in punk, is the day that punk loses any value.

"BUT WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT IT???"

It's important to remember that punk existed before MySpace, and punk will survive MySpace. Punk existed before the Internet. I've heard countless bands say, "I don't know how people booked tours before MySpace." But the answer is simple. People used e-mail. People used telephones. The punk scene thrived then as much as it does now, if not more. BLACK FLAG didn't need MySpace to tour the country, neither do you.

What do I propose? Well, since this is a punk critique of MySpace, I propose we start at home: a punk-wide migration. MySpace isn't going to just go away. BUT it will certainly continue to grow as long as it has the unquestioning support of anyone using the Internet to promote their music. We can create a counter-example. Like the record labels we start, the DIY venues, record stores, and infoshops, we can create a separate online network by supporting DIY web designers and focusing our communication through their channels. This is a very real possibility. Social networking websites are fickle. Should the tide shift towards a better designed non-corporate alternative the affect on MySpace could be crippling. WIKIPEDIA is an excellent example of an egalitarian non-profit motivated website that saw a void and filled it. It can be done.

There are arguments against the social impact MySpace has on means of communication, as well as its usefulness as an information gathering tool for the police, and as a perpetuation of voyeuristic surveillance culture. I don't really have time or space to go into it, but I would like to offer the idea that MORE COMMUNICATION DOES NOT EQUAL BETTER COMMUNICATION. And I'd like to challenge anyone reading this to try and differentiate between those two things when you use the Internet in the future.

I'd like to qualify that I don't think that punks using MySpace is anywhere close to the most important issue we could be talking about. I have noticed that political discussion seems to be fairly unfashionable in the punk scene these days, and I think that ANY kind of discourse or self-criticism is sorely needed. This

was just an attempt at picking an issue that I know people will respond to and getting that ball rolling. Thanks for reading my rant about a dumb website. It's a work in progress. Get in touch at thespoonboy@riseup.net. Though I'm bad with e-mail, I'd welcome any discourse. I have a goal to put up a website with alternative web resources to MySpace and maybe a 10 step program for weaning yourself from it. I'll let y'all know how that goes!



All I Want for my Birthday is Sleep

"How are you doing now?" Victor is asking me about something. I assume he means the cold I had last week. "Have you started freaking out yet?" Oh.

"No. I am still okay."

I am not sure that he believes me. "You have a few more days," he says before hanging up.

It is a few days before my thirtieth birthday. I am not the first of my friends to reach this, but everyone, regardless of their age, wonders when I will crack. Victor says he was fine until he suddenly decided he needed to get out of town and bought a plane ticket to Brazil. Matt K., among others, says 31 is worse. My dad just realized he will have a 30 year old daughter. I tell everyone, truthfully, that I am excited to be older.

I learn to silk screen and make 80 posters for a show/birthday party/pot luck. Rachel agrees to host it at the warehouse where she lives. I invite Travis to visit from Florida, plan on making two kinds of cupcakes, and find a puffy pink dress in a free box. We have band practice twice a week, write two new songs. Everyone invites their co-workers. Dave even calls to say he wasn't going to be back in town in time. I worry that we will not have enough cupcakes. I don't even like parties much. I do like celebrating my birthday. I like mile-markers and measuring growth and changes. I even like comparing haircuts and tallying losses and victories. I like dressing up and I like chocolate cake. Plans for the party roll forward. I wonder what the touring band will think of all this.

For the six weeks preceding my birthday, I work at a summer arts camp for kids. I ride my bike for forty minutes to the suburbs of New Orleans every morning, and then spend most of the day with twelve middle school kids who are excited about superheroes, Teletubbies, lunch, everything and nothing. Some days they leap off chairs and some times they sit under the tables. If they are tired of teachers talking, they say: "Can we make something already?"

On the last day of camp, when asked if they want to make art, Kyle, my co-worker, was answered with a deafening "NO!"

But the morning rides were peaceful. I thought about lesson plans and bike trips I could take. I had imaginary arguments and conversations. I made up stories. And one day, after a long conversation with a good friend about formal education, I thought about applying to school. I applied last year at a non-accredited craft school and I may apply again this year. But, I might apply to college. As a freshman. Because I have never been to college. Approaching thirty there is a short but solid list of things I have never done: smoked pot, hopped a freight train, fired a gun, or gone to college.

So I rode to work every morning debating the benefits of a large state school versus a smaller private school. Do I really want to move away? Do I really need a degree? I mean, in what way will I feel that having a BFA will be an advantage? Am I really going to start art school now?

This is my third year at this camp. I was hired initially as an intern, an assistant to the artist/teachers. Interns can be fourteen, though most of them are 16-21. Every year I have done some teaching in my classes. Last year I began planning lessons to propose to the director. When I found out that my friend Kyle would be teaching print classes, I immediately called the program director and asked to be his intern. Assisting him is great but he asked me the first week why don't I teach. In a room of other teachers, who are in many ways, my peers, I wasn't sure. I know I could. But sometimes, even talking to recent graduates, I feel like I have missed something in the way I have been educated. I have learned a lot from occasional classes and studio rental. I read a lot, write, discuss with my friends. But sometimes I feel like I am always a little behind. Maybe it is all about self-confidence. This is the way I freak out about my age. I decide to apply to college.

There are other reasons: I would like to be able to work on my books and prints and learn more processes and be able to focus on only that.

I would like someone to stop these run-on sentences. But I also would like to apply for teaching jobs. My experience is often enough for me to have an interview but without any formal schooling, I often do not get the job.

So, this is how I panic about getting older—I research colleges, let my hair grow long, and think about how to get a credit card without any pay stubs. Should I worry about selling out, getting old and giving up? Not a chance.

For my birthday, I cut my hair and someone gave me a pet chicken. I woke at seven and baked myself a cake. Travis drove from Florida to visit for 24 hours because I extended the invitation. And, he says, when we believe hard-to-plan events are seemingly impossible things without trying, then something is wrong. So, tomorrow I will figure out how to explain the last ten years of my informal education on a college application.

Next time, I will probably write more about this city I love. But it seems like tricky luck to write in the middle of hurricane season when this will be published after the worst of the sea-

son. If you want more stories about New Orleans, I just finished a collaboration with John of I Hate this Part of Texas. It is issue 7 of both of our zines. Send \$2 to P.O. Box 791639 New Orleans, LA 70179



WELCOME TO FUCKEDVILLE

1. There are defining moments that choose us.

We know this: moments that gather themselves around us, that mark a particular chapter or change in our lives. They are small events or monumental ones—a lot of times it doesn't necessarily seem like it's got to be a huge, consequential thing (though, yeah, oftentimes it is), but rather just a small blip that passes across the geography of your life, where you're, like, present for it—able to see and feel it—and can recognize how it marks a new high or low in the landscape of your time here, of your inner life. You understand? They're just these moments that smack you in the chops with their clarity, their ache—sweet or not—of your living. These moments that bring us right back into ourselves, our place in life, what we have gathered about us, what we have lost. I've had dozens, hundreds:

The night my father left a series of drunken, increasingly incoherent messages on my answering machine after he'd been totally sober for nearly fifteen years.

Tanya and I, on a weekend trip once. A beach trip, flying a ninety-nine cent sweet-ass Strawberry Shortcake kite, the two of us totally alone on the sand while rain-flecked wind lashed us, the sky up above—the color of stone. Me, smiling like a fucking maniac. Me, quietly joyous.

My grandfather, small and yellowed on his deathbed. This man—who was never once unkind or unjust to me, who was in a war but did not have to kill men, who once had a multi-barbed fishhook punch entirely through the webbing between his thumb and forefinger, who flattened the barbs with a pair of pliers in his free hand and pulled the hook free, doing it without so much as a hiss of pain—now lay there unintentionally groaning in quiet, nameless agony. His eyes searching the room, when my grandmother leaned down close to him and said, "Keith has to go now. He wants to say goodbye." How I touched him so lightly on the hand, afraid that any contact would somehow hurt him more, his eyes finally settling on me, the blank pain in them not changing at all. But he said, almost sounding surprised, "I can see Keith." They were the last words I ever heard him speak. I said to him quietly, my hand so gently on his, this yawning hurt for him, ham-

mered and centered somewhere between my stomach and my throat, "Goodbye, Grandpa. I'll see you later." I left to get on the Greyhound home and he died three hours later.

Neckties Make Me Nervous, playing a show, in which the music we made seemed to not be just five dudes screaming and pounding away at shit separately, haphazardly, so afraid of failing, but instead locking into this brief moment of time, fifteen or twenty minutes tops, in which we were seamed and stitched together so good. Cohesive, with hands so sure of themselves, those chords I played, cementing themselves to the bass and drums and tearing throats, all of it soaring into something so much bigger and stronger and more beautiful and angry and sad than anything we could have done alone, than anything I could have done without them.

Nineteen and blackly hungover and reaching, reaching inside the cooler of a convenience store for a small bottle of orange juice. My hand grasping it, those cooled ridges of glass, that dark hangover wracking me, my hands riddled with tremors. And the bottle falling from my hand, shattering on the floor, juice and glass shards arcing and fanning outwards and what was left of my life seeming to grind to a stop at that exact moment. As if a page of my life had turned forever, somehow. I didn't drink for nearly five years after that.

Waiting for a bus some hot summer night, maybe nineteen, some older dude swaggers around the bus stop, loudly belittling his girlfriend, bitch and cunt reverberating off the pavement. She stands there mute, her head down, just the three of us there. I give him a look and he says, "You want some too, bitch?" and swings, stopping just short of actually hitting me. I flinch anyway. "What I thought," he says, smiling. I say nothing back, afraid.

My father dying with a beer in his hand.

These memories, like flashbulbs marking a hall you've already walked down. These memories: breadcrumbs that lead us back to ourselves, remind us who we are, were, hope to be.

And I had one today—just one of those brief flashes of recognition that pull you back into your station and placement in life. I have been drinking every night for the past few weeks; drinking hard, rarely eating, rarely sleeping, just slammed up again and again against those questions of What? When? Where? How did it start between them? Did we ever really know each other at all? These are nights that stretch their arms wide and last forever. I cannot stop thinking, cannot find closure for this. It's a metronome that lessens when I'm among friends but never entirely goes away. I have begun dry-heaving at bus stops from dehydration and lack of sleep, lack of food, everything spinning to the point where I lean against a utility pole so I don't fall down. Lawyers have begun calling me regarding debts that I owe. I do not know where next month's rent will come from. I've got the most hilariously, insanely raging case of hemorrhoids I've ever had in my life—all drink and no food, right—to the point where it feels like someone's driven a Honda Civic up my asshole. Due to lack of Federal funding

in a particular school district. I no longer have a job. My mother fell down at work and broke both of her ankles and one of her wrists and is just now beginning to heal. Her vulnerability, her mortality, weighs on me.

I've made the trek from my apartment to the Safeway ten, fifteen blocks away, me and the aching Honda Civic I'm carrying around in my fucking drawers just want to get in, buy some groceries and get out. I've got my little basket and fully recognize that things are going south, things are slipping away from me hard and fast, I need to get it together. It is the first day or night I haven't drank in some time and I put bananas, soup, carrots in the basket; I will come away from this somehow, I will make it through. I will begin treating myself better. It is the first sliver of hope that I've felt in some time.

And when I am leaning over the green peppers there in Safeway—fragilely adamant that I will make it through all of this wreckage somehow—my nose just begins to gush blood, like someone twisted a spigot. I drop the basket, my hand over my nose, my head raised, warm copper etching the back of my throat. I walk out of the store, begin stork-walking my way home and after a few blocks it's stopped. I spit thick wads of blood onto the ground, that electric taste of batteries in the back of my throat, hope dismantled fast.

One of those moments that just carves itself into you and brings you right back to exactly where you are, you know?

Spitting blood, I just kept thinking, How did I wind up here? Was there a specific instant that brought me here? What choices have I made that took me right to this moment: in my early thirties, jobless, spitting blood on the sidewalk and stumbling around like an assfucked penguin because I've got Gwar-sized hemorrhoids, which has got to be the uncoolest bodily misfunction short of the Weeping Penis? How did this happen? With no real future and a history that, it turns out, is not what I thought it was at all, how in the shit did this happen?

And all that came back was my own voice, resigned and oddly jubilant:

Welcome to Fuckedville, man. This is where you live now.

2. Last summer was supposed to be Jetski Summer '06, but it didn't work out. Not because tragedy struck, nothing as dramatic as that; we just didn't know anyone with jetskis we could borrow.

So this summer was supposed to be Burrito Summer '07; there was a tangible goal, something physical, doable, a goal not remotely reliant on anyone else. This one, we could do ourselves. And then, within this small circle of friends, tragedies—some great and some just wearing, grinding—did strike. And kept striking, it seemed, over and over again.

By late June Burrito Summer was shitcanned and we'd taken to calling it Bummer Summer instead. And the hits, man, they just kept coming: Bad breakups, financial ruin, parents caught cheating on other parents after twenty-

five years of marriage, dead mothers, dead fathers, blossoming alcoholism, the suicides of friends. Sitting on Ben and Jacie's porch or one smoke-ceilinged bar or another, one of us would regale the rest with yet another tale of our further descent into unadulterated bummers. After the usual stilted attempts at consolation were made, after we'd all sighed "Jesus Christ" and "Sorry, man" and "I can't fucking believe it," someone, usually Mullett, would hit a pint and say, "Well, looks like Bummer Summer's still in full effect."

It gets wearing, you know. It gets to the point that the next calamity arrives and you're left with nothing really left to do but just nod and trudge on through the day, nothing left to do but flip the record over and lay the needle down and wait for time to do its work. What else is there? Famous last words would and could be: Bummer Summer is coming to an end. Because, hell, it'll be Fall by the time you read this. Something's got to change, right? But there's the fear there: what if, what if Bummer Summer turns into, I don't know, Long Fall Fall, something marginally literary but equitably stupid like that? What then?

What happens if the hits keep coming just long enough that you're left continually waiting for the other shoe to drop? What happens when you come to expect tragedy, errors, inertia?

My father died last month. Fifty six years old, a beer in his hand, totally broke, essentially destitute and almost entirely alone in the world, having run through nearly every friend, every family member he had, having burned the shit out of just about every bridge he'd ever built. And the odd thing is that, while there was such a chasm between us, forged out of violence, distance, years and fear, even writing or talking about his life or his death feels like the greatest betrayal. As if something was owed, as if terror should be absolved, as if the story of this man's life should be gilded in honor, when he was not, at his core and even in his best moments, probably, a very honorable man.

Even with that in mind, I write this and I feel like I'm ransacking the dead. You know? In my head, it's like a bad youth crew band in action, man; the singer's bellowing something about stabbing someone in the back.

As I lift my own beer up to lamplight right now, yes, it feels as if I've stabbed my father in the back by refusing to deny the fact that it's quite possible that he has done much more harm than good in his life.

And that's the hard part about Bummer Summer and it's requisite playlist of hurts, fuckups and ruins: this sense that, good fucking Christ, how do you walk through the world with a minor amount of grace? How do you do this well, when rent's due in a week and your bank account's overdrawn by a hundred bucks? When your father's died drunk and alone, or your father's recently been caught and admitted to clandestinely fucking other dudes and shattering a marriage? When your mother has broken her legs or when she's just died? When it seems like you leave a trail of ruin everywhere you go? How do you treat people well

and justly when it feels like life is just getting the giggles over throat-punching the shit out of you over and over again?

Riddle me this, Batman: In the face of adversity, when you're headlong in the throes of Bummer Summer and the hits just keep coming, how do you bring more good than harm to the world?

Because, that's as far as my sense of morality extends. That's what I'm bringing to the table as far as a belief system goes. I find myself unable to reconcile the concept of God with what I see happening in the world or on my street; I do not think that people are intrinsically kind. I think that we are, as humans generally are (and this includes me, yeah), self-centered, solipsistic abominations, unless we try really, really hard to be otherwise. It's not easy.

In the face of continuing calamity, how do we learn to walk well in the world?

All that hoo-ha you just read is a slightly-altered version of stuff that'll be in Avow #22, out one of these freaking years. Meantime: CivilWarLand In Bad Decline by George Saunders | The Pugilist At Rest by Thom Jones | The Thin Red Line by James Jones | Mishap #22/23 | Criminal Damage LP

Keith Rosson | 1615 SE Main St. | Portland, OR 97214 | keith@keithrosson.com

down & dirty with:

THE DOWN THERE HEALTH COLLECTIVE

How the HPV Vaccine Shows We Need to Smash the State

Dear Down There—

I heard you were writing a zine about HPV, and I was wondering what you all thought about the new HPV vaccine. I'm not really sure if I should get the vaccine or if it's just another money-maker for drug companies. Any thoughts?

Yours truly,

Question POSER.

Hello QP—

Glad you asked—we're looking forward to releasing our zine at the beginning of the year, and we hope it's as informative for you as the whole process of writing it has been for us. We do talk a little about the vaccine in the zine. Here's an excerpt from the text:

A driving force behind the Down There Health Collective's work is the desire to take control of our well-being back from medical professionals and a profit-driven, government-controlled health care industry. When the HPV vaccine came out in mid-2006, there was a flood of information. With healthy skepticism, we've tried to sort through the hype and drug company propaganda. What follows is our effort to take a critical look at the vaccine and the politics surrounding its use.

First off, a few facts about HPV and the vaccine

HPV is a common virus that can, in rare cases, cause cervical and other kinds of cancer. The virus itself is very common, and a healthy person's immune system can usually fight it off without the person even knowing they had an infection. Very few people infected with HPV ever develop cancer, but many health professionals say that HPV causes all cervical cancer. Some strains, or types, of HPV also cause genital warts and warts on the skin.

Like vaccines for measles, polio, or the flu, the HPV vaccine uses dead or weakened viruses that stimulate the immune system to make antibodies (proteins in your blood stream that recognize and flag foreign matter). The premise is that the next time your body encounters the same virus it will recognize and destroy it quickly. This mimics the process of developing immunity after an infection (such as with chickenpox). Gardasil, the vaccine currently on the market, protects against the four HPV types that cause 70% of cervical cancers and 90% of genital warts.

Be aware that getting the vaccine does NOT mean you can skip out on regular pap tests (screenings for cervical cancer). The vaccine isn't technically a vaccine against cancer; it protects against the strains of HPV that are most likely to cause cancer.

There's a lot more technical information about the vaccine than we can include in such a small space; we recommend doing more research if you're really interested or if you want more information before deciding whether to get the vaccine.

And now, some politics.....

The pharmaceutical industry has successfully put HPV in the spotlight through widespread, pervasive media and lobbying campaigns. We have uncovered endless layers of questions, half-truths and oversimplifications coming from both supporters and opponents of the vaccine. It is not as simple as supporting "the first ever vaccine against cancer" as Merck claims. At the same time, the vaccine does have the potential to prevent many cases of cervical cancer and lower the need for invasive treatments. A critical look at the vaccine means a critical look at the health care system, the pharmaceutical industry's influence on public health policy, vaccination policy and, of course, capitalism.

The controversy surrounding the HPV vaccine reveals the complicated herstory of women not being given the full information needed to take control of our health. With the knowledge that a healthy immune system and regular screenings are the two most important tools in preventing cervical cancer, we can't help but wonder why the vaccine has suddenly become the sole focus in the debate about HPV. What about ensuring access to regular screenings, healthy food, and quality health care for everyone?

Mandatory Legislation?

As a result of Merck's heavy lobbying efforts, legislators in all 50 states have introduced leg-

islation to require, fund or educate the public about the HPV vaccine. By May 2007, legislation to make the HPV vaccine a school entry requirement for girls had been introduced in 25 states and Washington, DC. This near immediate support by policy makers for a new health technology is unprecedented. Anticipating that its competitor would be on the market soon, Merck had a strong financial incentive to establish its market without delay.

HPV: Help Pay for Vioxx?

These vaccines don't come cheap. Gardasil is one of the most expensive vaccines ever marketed: three shots over six months at \$120 each. Texas alone paid \$50 million for the first year of vaccinations. Merck hopes to generate 3 billion dollars in annual sales from Gardasil.

Merck happens to be the same company that potentially stands to lose \$14 billion in lost profits and legal costs due to the Vioxx scandal. Vioxx, an arthritis painkiller, was pulled off the market in 2004 after a major study confirmed that the drug raised the risk of heart attack and stroke. Merck currently faces 27,000 lawsuits related to Vioxx. Yet Merck is telling us to trust them and the HPV vaccine! Are they just trying to recoup their losses?

While we're on the subject of liability, lawsuits, and profits, there's another angle to consider: if Merck can get state governments to put Gardasil on their lists of vaccines that are required for schoolchildren, it can become a part of a federal vaccine liability program - meaning that Merck will not be liable if Gardasil turns out to be harmful sometime in the future.

Politicization of Our Health

In order to make the best decisions about our health we need thorough and accessible information. The public debate surrounding the HPV vaccine does not address all the issues that we need to consider when deciding whether the vaccine is right for us. As usual, if you get the majority of your information through the popular media, you are not getting the full story.

Unfortunately, even the more "progressive" media sources have, instead of asking the difficult questions, responded only to the Christian right's opposition to the vaccine who believe that it will encourage young people to be sexually active. We want answers and engaging the Christian Right's abstinence-only agenda with a knee-jerk response supporting mandatory vaccinations is irresponsible and potentially dangerous.

Why HPV, Why Now?

Cervical cancer rates in the US have steadily declined since the advent and widespread use of Pap tests. Merck even states this fact prominently on their literature and website. According to the American Cancer Society, the number of cervical cancer deaths in the US dropped by 74 percent between 1955 and 1992 because it is a largely preventable and curable cancer. Some questions to ask ourselves:

- Why is it so expensive?
- Who is it being marketed to?

- What is the rush to vaccinate, especially to make the vaccine a school entry requirement? Why not wait for more long term studies?
- Why not first introduce the vaccine as voluntary rather than mandatory for young girls?
- Who will pay for such an expensive mandated vaccine?
- Why do politicians feel it is necessary to mandate a vaccine when simple health measures like STI testing and Pap tests are not accessible to many people? Why not instead focus attention and money on health education and access to health care?

A Global Perspective

We have chosen to focus on the HPV vaccine in the US, but we recognize that HPV affects people differently in other parts of the world. Our analysis should be global and informed. Our own solutions must allow for other people and communities to decide for themselves and access the resources needed to create the health care that is best for them.

Almost 80% of cervical cancer cases occur in impoverished nations that the health care infrastructure to provide regular screening and preventive services. While we do not want mandatory vaccines, but we DO want access (including information and affordability) to the vaccine for people and communities who think it is right for them and worth any risks that might be involved.

What is the likelihood that Merck or any other pharmaceutical company is going to make this vaccine available at cost or for free in countries where cervical cancer is a leading killer of women? And, if governments want to fund the vaccine, who gets to decide if the money would be better spent providing health education, preventative health care, nutritious food and Pap tests rather than improving Merck's profit margin? An HPV vaccine will not fix the unfortunate fact that women are not receiving adequate healthcare.

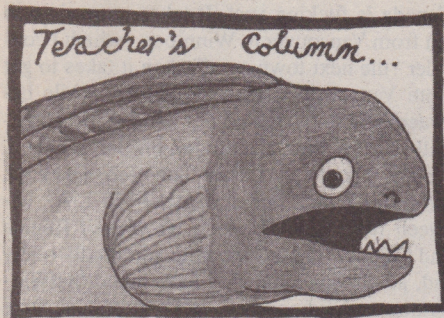
We want control over our own health!

This means access, information, options, and choice. We want children to be taught about and to understand their bodies. We want a culture that embraces and provides for holistic, culturally appropriate health care. We want a society that understands the connections between mental health, nutrition, rest, plants, the natural world and physical health. We want to learn how to do our own Pap tests and have access to labs to analyze them. We want free Pap tests. We want free and accessible health care. We want access to naturopaths, herbalists, massage therapists, midwives, and doctors that listen. We want communities where we can create and control our own health care.

Don't forget that this column is also an advice column. You can write to us at downthere-health@mutualaid.org if you have feedback or suggestions for our column, or if you have a question you'd like us to answer or an herb

you'd like to see featured. We want to hear from you!

For a copy of the HPV zine please write to holly and megan: 737 quebec place NW, Washington dc 20010. Include \$2 for postage and copying.



Sabrina Gallagher

"I have a raccoon in my zoo, Miss Gallagher..." declared a small voice belonging to a pale, dark-haired, wide-eyed girl named Daisy. She didn't look up at me once whilst saying these words. She was so diligently detailing this red, furry-looking animal with black circles around the eyes, black marks on its ears and a black nose. After its face was completely finished with signature black marks from the five-year-old artist, she allowed her concentration on her drawing to be broken for a brief moment to look up at me and add, "...and I made him red!"

Last year I taught kindergarten. Our letter of this particular week was letter R. After reading *If I Ran the Zoo*, by Dr. Seuss, Daisy and the rest of my class were working on a literacy activity that involved them thinking of animals that began with the letter R for their imaginary zoos. I smiled at Daisy's picture, told her she had done a wonderful job, and continued to observe the other children in the class. Walking around the room, I saw vivid, crayon-drawn depictions of reindeer, rhinos, rabbits and rats. Some children included colorful food for their animals. Others drew people coming to see the animals in the zoo. One child drew a rabbit, eating radishes, being watched by a girl (named Ruth), who was holding a red balloon!!! Then I made my way over to Ben's table. The 9 x 12 piece of white construction paper contained only two things: a small green line slightly to the left of the paper's center, and the shaky, uneven, writing of the name Ben. By the time I caught a glimpse of Ben's work, the children had already been working on this assignment for 15 minutes.

Ben despised fine-motor activities although he was extremely bright, especially in the subject of literacy. He immediately told me his drawing was of a rattlesnake named Rocco, clearly demonstrating his understanding of the letter R. But why, after 15 minutes, was his page only filled with a green line and his name? Ben was quite familiar with my response to his work performance on assignments like these. "I believe you can do better, Ben," I said. "Now let's get you to believe it." Like many times before this, Ben would work on the assignment some more during the end of the day when the other

children had playtime. By 3 o'clock, Ben had handed in a kindergarten masterpiece. He was very pleased to see that his drawing received a star and a sticker. The children added this assignment to their alphabet journals. We did at least two journal entries a week.

So many journal assignments went this way for Ben. He initially would put forth only the least amount of effort needed to complete the assignment. Then he would hear my Believe in Yourself speech and spend his afternoon playtime finishing the assignment. There were days when he completed the assignment in tears while periodically glancing over to where the other children were dressing up in the Playskool kitchen, painting a picture on the art easel, or playing Candyland. He was stuck finishing up his work, which he seemed to HATE doing in the first place! Speaking honestly, there were times when even I hated putting him through that. But I kept tough with Ben for two main reasons. A more obvious reason would perhaps be that coloring helped his fine-motor skills improve dramatically. His once-wild and almost illegible handwriting had, by June, refined itself into a clear, neat appearance. He was coloring in the lines, drawing straight lines and cutting on the lines also. Another reason, and a reason far closer to my heart, would be to instill pride in this child. Ben comes from a single-parent household. Like so many single-parent households, wonderful parents do the best they can to make ends meet. They work long hours and weekends just to afford a standard of living suitable for their families. Babysitters, childcare, and after-school programs often looked after Ben. Sometimes, Ben was in school from 8 am to 5 pm, during which hours perhaps another child, somewhere else, is getting homework support, hugs and kisses, positive reinforcement and just a chance to be around his/her mother. Ben also never had anything "cool." He always wore tattered hand-me-down clothes, ate government-bought lunches and never contributed much when his peers were trading Pokemon cards and discussing X-box games. In fact, the only time he knew he had one-up over anyone else in his life was when he belted out correct answers during lessons or heard me tell him how clever he was... or, of course, when he saw the star and sticker! For this reason, I had to keep pushing Ben to always do his best even if it caused him to think me the meanest teacher in the whole wide world!

For most of the year, that's what I assumed he thought of me. Although I was stern, I was always positive, choosing words of encouragement instead of discussing what he was doing wrong. "But what does that matter to a five-year-old?" I thought to myself. "He just sees me as the reason he doesn't have playtime."

At the end of the year, we had kindergarten graduation. Since the parents attend, they usually bring the children home with them after the ceremony. My classroom was flooded with presents, flowers and fruit baskets all dropped off from generous parents. In the whirlwind of smiling for photos, saying goodbyes and giving out hugs and kisses, I hadn't taken much notice

to what or where Ben was. Little by little, the classroom filled moments ago with students and their families had nearly emptied. I said goodbye to the last family and sighed with relief at the thought that I had done my job for another year and summer was waiting for me starting tomorrow!

"Miss Gallagher?" I looked around and saw Ben in the doorway. It hadn't even occurred to me that I never said goodbye to him. "Oh, thank goodness you're still here!" said his mom, Kelly, "I left your gift in the car. We had to run and get it!" I took a grinning picture with Ben, thanked him for the gift and kissed him goodbye. That night I took the gifts home and went through each of them. Ben's gift was a vase filled with tulips, but tied to it with ribbon was a scrolled piece of paper. I untied the ribbon and held the scroll open to read it. His mother's writing was on top...

Dear Miss Gallagher,

Thanks for a great year. For your card, I asked Ben to think of his favorite part of being in your class and he drew you a picture of it. We hope you like it.

Enjoy your summer.

Love,

Ben (and Kelly)

I broke into tears as I realized what the picture was. Ben had most articulately drawn a portrait of himself working on his journal with the other children. I didn't have to read Kelly's caption below to know that his picture was titled, "Working on My Journal." In his picture, Ben was smiling and his journal page had a star and a sticker on it!

Why I choose to share this particular teaching experience with Give Me Back readers is because I have felt what it was like to be Ben. The energy behind giving me a sense of accomplishment and self-worth and encouraging me to believe in myself and act on my beliefs has come to me largely from going to shows and listening to the words and music of some amazing bands. I impress my findings, teachings and experiences on my students. In a way, they take from me what I took from music.

I was involved in music ever since high school. My friends would occasionally take me to shows and it would be fun and something to do on a Friday night and that would be the extent of it. I never paid much attention to the energy or the messages back then. I wish I had.

About three years ago, I started going to shows more regularly. I was dating someone in a band and I hardly missed his shows. I guess this time I was more mature or emotionally strong enough to start listening to what the bands were saying and apply it to my life, but whatever the reason, I grew as a person dramatically. I looked closely at the wrong that had been inflicted upon me and that I had suppressed for so long. I realized that people had hurt me in my life. I realized that I was also being hurt presently and was allowing myself to be hurt because of how painful my past was. I was taught that human beings deserve better than the hate,

abuse and manipulation we are fed on a daily basis. I was taught that I deserve better than that also. I began to know who I was and my whole world mattered to me. Issues started to spring themselves upon me and tie themselves directly to my heart, making it impossible not to fight for them and find solutions for them and work towards making things better. I could be indifferent no more. It happened. I started believing in myself and believing that I could take actions towards positive change and improvement. I was continually inspired by work people were doing all around me. It seemed as though the people crammed into small basements and making minimum wage were doing more to "save the world" than the Armani-clad politicians with their press appearances and bold promises. The person I am now would quite possibly be unrecognizable to the person I was three years ago, and I can never go back.

Maybe it would be easier to have not reached this point in my life. I work around the clock balancing a career, an NPO, participating in grassroots projects, working on music, constantly self-educating, writing letters to congressmen, and many, many other activities. Like Ben, maybe there are moments when playtime seems more inviting to me. But if I had to choose a period in my life that I felt to be the most defining, most important, "my favorite part," it would be the time, the places and the experiences I've gotten over the last three years. So I guess I consider this column to be my scrolled up thank you card.

Sabrina Gallagher - Ssdec21@yahoo.com



How to Simply and Legally Visit Canada for the Purposes of Playing All-Ages Shows

Border guards are cops, and therefore are bastards. Anyone choosing an occupation limiting the freedom of movement (which, as we know, is historically the oldest and most elementary freedom) through an arbitrary geographical border must be at least kind of a psychopath. Canadian border guards are just as dickish and racist and classist as American ones, despite any stereotypes you might have heard about Canada being a kinder, gentler, and more tolerant country. For a good four years, approximately 75 per cent of American bands I booked were turned away at the border even though there is no law stating that foreign-based bands can't come into the Canada to play in a punk house basement. That is an issue with the fire marshal and health inspector, thanks. My theory is that they were just being assholes. At the same

time though, most of these bands thought they needed to sneak across so they came across as sketchbags. But recently when bands coming across the border have been quoting this law about how certain kinds of "concerts" are okay for foreign bands to play without work permits, it's been super successful.

Check it: the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, specifically section 186(g), was amended in 2002 to allow foreign-based bands, theatre groups, circuses, buskers, wedding singers, and World Wrestling Entertainment wrestlers to come to Canada as visitors as long as their performance is time-limited (the specifics of this are that an unlimited amount of performances in a two-week period is defined as "reasonable" whereas spending a season in an orchestra is not), they are not in an employment relationship with a Canadian business, and the performance is not in a bar, restaurant, coffee or tea house, or "similar establishment," unless such a performance is part of the program of a larger festival. An indicator of what is considered a "similar establishment," and not a "concert venue," is that the former will primarily hire entertainers in order to attract customers who will buy food and alcohol and is open before and after the performance to serve customers. The latter may serve food and alcohol, but its primary purpose is the sale of the live entertainment. Listed allowable venues are: auditoriums, community centers, legion halls, bingo establishments, public parks, religious establishments, shopping malls, and sports arenas. I would venture that venues such as skate shops and indoor skate parks, art galleries, and record stores are also allowable to play as foreign visitors since they fit under the requirement of not primarily serving food and alcohol. Also, performers at private events such as house parties and weddings are exempt from requiring visas.

SHIT TO REMEMBER

Bring your passport. Not because you necessarily need it to come up to Canada (birth certificate and photo ID will suffice), but you will soon require it to re-enter the United States. I think.

If you have a warrant for your arrest, are on probation, or have a DUI on your record, you have a good chance of getting denied. If you are asked about these things at the border, just admit to them because they will come up when they run your ID anyway and lying is grounds for long-term banishment.

The border guards may just harass the shit out of you anyway. Even though Canadian border guards often have like lip rings and badly bleached hair, they are still douchebag cops high on their vested authority of choosing who is allowed passage into our precious, stupid country. It's total chance. They may also just wave you through with no questions at all.

I wouldn't bother pretending you are playing an all-ages event and trying to use this law when you are actually playing a bar or whatever, especially if you are using your real band name, or have any merchandise with you or anything with your real band name in your vehicle. Bar

events are often listed on the internet and border guards are internet-savvy (i.e. they know how to type a band name into a search engine or myspace and see what comes up) and you'll be found out and banned from Canada for like five years. Not a huge deal because it's just boring Canada, but this seriously happens.

Canada is fucking vast. It takes more time to get from Vancouver to Winnipeg, (which I consider "the next town over") than it takes to get from Vancouver to San Diego. So, while between here and Mexico my band could potentially hit up Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, Salem, Arcata, Sacramento, San Francisco, Oakland, Ventura County, and somewhere in L.A., between here and Winnipeg we played Regina and Calgary. These were both admittedly really rad, albeit small shows. I have heard that Saskatoon and Edmonton can be good and there are rumors that shows in Vernon or Kamloops happen sometimes. Shit is sparse.

GET TO WORK

Whoever is putting the Canadian show on should send a fax explaining the event to the crossing that the band is coming through. The band should show the same letter when they cross the border. Some promoters insist you need to make a fake contract, but I'm not into pretending I'm a professional. I feel like fronting like that makes me seem incredibly awkward and will therefore make the border suspicious, like when I dress up for a job interview and somehow look like I have an addictions problem. Plus, after researching this law, it seems to me like a large part of the amendment was due to the absurdity of considering certain musical performances "employment," so I'm not sure how pretending my little punk show is a professional, contractual concert rather than a low-key event based upon a verbal agreement amongst friends increases the chance of the band getting over.

Here's an example of a letter I've used:

To Whom It May Concern,

The band "Scum System Kill" from Australia has been invited to Canada to play at a party located at 2028 e 12th, Vancouver, BC in a house nick-named "The Library". The band expects to receive donations from attendees for the enjoyment of their performance; however, the band does not require a work permit for this engagement as the concert falls under the criteria of Section 186(g) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

(186. A foreign national may work in Canada without a work permit ... (g) as a performing artist appearing alone or in a group in an artistic performance - other than a performance that is primarily for a film production or a television or radio broadcast - or as a member of the staff of such a performing artist or group who is integral to the artistic performance, if

(i) they are part of a foreign production or group, or are a guest artist in a Canadian production or group, performing a time-limited engagement, and

(ii) they are not in an employment relationship with the organization or business in Canada that is contracting for their services, nor performing in a bar, restaurant or similar establishment.)

The members of the bands are as follows:

(Full legal name of Australian 1) 27/4/1979

(Full legal name of Australian 2) 18/5/1979

(Full legal name of Australian 3) 12/7/1979

(Full legal name of Australian 4) 7/2/1979

They as well have a driver with them, an American, I believe:

American driver 8/12/1979

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (my phone number). Thank you, (my full legal name)

The future is now. Come to Canada. Good luck. I'm not agreeing to facilitate anyone's Western Canadian tours, but I might. If you have questions or need some contacts, I'm at julsgeneric@hotmail.com



"You don't have to carry the weight of other people when you play music. You just have to play for you."

These words were spoken to me by one of my closest friends after our band played out of town. I had a poor performance coupled with my drum kit toppling over mid-set. For some reason, that night, far away from home, I had a breakdown of sorts. My bandmate found me crying at the side of the house, totally frustrated. He tried to extract from me exactly what upset me so much. I explained that the people there would assume that my less-than-stellar performance was contingent on my gender rather than on an off night.

I was nineteen.

Ten years later I have met a number of people. I have played in a few bands, jammed with folks, worked with others on shows, fests, zines, labels, projects. Still, I remember distinctly the wonderful way in which my friend Drew supported me and encouraged my growth as a musician, artist, and person. We lived together in a group house and played in a touring band for a number of years. We listened to records together, shopped for music equipment together, and often spent hours working out parts of songs. I met Drew when I was sixteen. We became fast friends, despite our very different personalities. When I talked to him about music—from the time I began playing drums at 17—he always spoke to me with the respect you afford a peer,

someone you actually believe in. This happened in a number of ways—sharing CDs, coming over to play together, eventually joining my band, introducing me to Led Zeppelin, waking me up when we were roommates at 10 am on the weekend to practice. Expressing genuine, tangible interest in me chasing the dream I had and a real desire to join me along the way.

I have played music with a number of incredible men and women. I felt like sharing a bit about the relationship with Drew because it was so special and so formative. When we were in a music store once a clerk asked me if "my boyfriend" was okay with the pedal I had chosen. Drew looked at him the face and said simply, "She's my drummer." It was simple, it wasn't overstated, and it felt like real, honest belief, faith and support. I hear people in our communities pay a lot of lip service to supporting women, queer people, people of color in punk communities which often marginalize their voices, but I so rarely see concrete action that isn't rooted in the desire to be praised or thanked. No one needed to explain this dynamic to Drew in our friendship. To him, I was myself—a person, a musician, capable.

I think a lot about issues of access and privilege. Who has access, from the time they are born, to people cheering them on, to a world that reinforces that they are capable, to the equipment and tools necessary to create art? I think about whose voices we hear from stages time and again. I think about the times when I know I have been a token — not a unique or vital voice, but a placeholder. In the years I spent playing in a band with all women, we were offered a number of shows that it was clear were just the result of our gender. Those were often the least interesting to entertain.

Sexism can look like this: handing out fliers to a show and only giving them to men and boys there. Putting bands with women on a bill so you can check that item off your checklist, not because you have actually developed relationships with women you believe in or who you genuinely admire. Assuming you know everything about a woman's ability based on looking at her. Assuming a woman is automatically good. Assuming a woman is automatically bad. Trying to procure women to play music in your band when you know nothing about their ability because you like the idea of how it will reflect on you or bring your band success. Describing any music women play as sounding like Sleater-Kinney. Assuming women don't have broad knowledge of music history. Assuming women don't know how to set up their own equipment. Thinking you know what genre someone will play or be drawn to based on their gender. Thinking you know what a woman's motivation is for playing music or her history with music when you meet her.

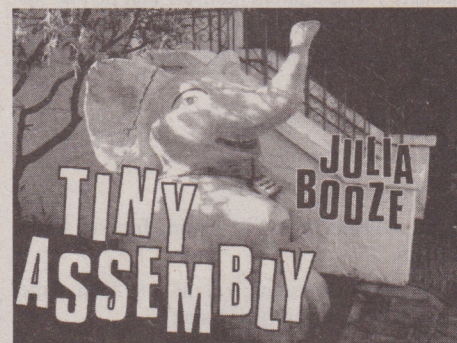
I got through the static of self doubt not only because I had a bandmate like Drew, but also because I was treated seriously by my community. I had access to mentors. When I wanted to put out my first record, Kim Coletta of Jawbox and DeSoto records helped on the phone. Jenny Toomey who ran Simple Machines and

played in Tsunami offered tips. Dischord and its staff provided assistance with distribution. I had bandmates that didn't coddle me but that told me when I did a good job or a bad job, listened to my ideas, and told me when I needed more practice. I was encouraged in ways that facilitated my growth.

I will always be comfortable playing music with women who have the same historical experiences that I do and who understand some of the different challenges and hurdles. I will always hunger for their ideas and voices. At the same time, I am glad I have experienced real support from men around music. Perhaps sharing what my experiences with that support have been can offer ideas to people who want to create space for a wider range of voices—a real space that isn't marginalizing or tokenizing.

I recognize I don't have a concept of what it is like to be a person of color playing music, but I have seen a lot of the same kinds of bogus assumptions come into play—assuming a black member of a band plays bass, not speaking to the person of color in the band about the money, comparing people of color's music to the only other bands you know that people of color populate. What it comes back to for me is the glaring, obvious reality that you don't need to look hard to find incredible artistic contributions by people from historically marginalized groups. And that often, once you do, you will hear perspectives that may have been missing from your life for a while.

Artistic expression is a life support for people who experience oppression. It allows us to take up space, share our voices, be loud, and tell our own stories. To document and record. It allows us to become whole, publicly. We are safer when we are visible and outspoken. Having access in tangible ways to this kind of space and voice has saved my life over and over. I consider it an inalienable right. So here's to all the people that have the guts to join the conversation when they haven't had easy access—and to the people in their lives who love and believe in them while they do it.



**IT'S MY JOB TO BE ANGRY,
IT'S YOUR JOB TO BE KIND**

Virginia Woolf wrote her novels and essays on a typewriter, sometimes editing to the point of re-writing a 180 to 240 page novel twenty-five times. Can you imagine? The time it must have taken...I can't go any faster than 20 words per minute on a typewriter, as opposed to almost 90 on a computer keyboard. I tend to edit

maybe half as many times as she did, depending on how bad my ideas are. If I had to use a typewriter, the first draft would be covered by blacked out words. But if I had to compose thoughts slower than it takes to actually handwrite them, I imagine I might hardly need to go back and scoff at a word choice, or remove entire sentences at all. But then, doesn't the mind compose at a speed more rapid than even the fastest typer? Virginia had very high standards for her output, delaying publication for the sake of perfection. Me, well, the word deadline originates from the name of a piece on the printing press where press bed ends and the rollers can't reach and that is what I think of first. If you want to print higher on the paper you must turn around your type. If you want to venture outside the margins you must turn your brain inside out.

Luckily my editor is my dear, understanding friend, who would coax me to write as an anorexic might be asked to eat, gently and persistently. Typing is more of a physical problem, as my circulation is utterly miserable and my wrists are in constant use, thus, aching arms is becoming a more common ailment these days. I have to use my wrists to work, any kind of work, but it's my own work that suffers the most. What good are thoughts that don't make it to the page? What have I got if I have no avenue to say it? When I was less aware of the slow death of my creative output, when I still considered myself a writer, I thought I might get a job as a typist.

For some reason I was living in Providence. Mikey convinced me to go there but he was off in Europe. I was near day 19 of looking through the classifieds, craigslist, haunting the bombed out summertime emptiness of coffee shops and art stores whose existence relied on the college students that were nonexistent in the early June lullaby of rain that I waded through. Mike came home and produced a lead. He was fairly earnest, which was why I listened as he told me about the post on the cork board at Whole Foods where someone, with clearly agonized, arthritic hands had written, simply "typist needed", with a phone number that he had jotted on his receipt for me.

"Where are you from?" the voice on the phone asked.

"Um, San Francisco area."

"Oh are you a student?"

No, I'm a punk

"Um, not right now. I'm visiting friends. About the job..."

"Yes, but just a minute. Let me ask, forgive me, I'm curious, but are you Asian?"

"Excuse me?"

"I'm sorry, but I was just wondering, you have an unfamiliar accent. Are you Japanese?"

"No."

"What are you?"

Pause

"I'm...white."

"Oh, just curious."

It went pretty much as you would expect from there, he was ignorant of the fact that his line of questioning was odd and suspicious, and I was desperate for work. We agreed I would meet him the next day around one o'clock.

When I arrived he answered the door barefoot in a pair of undignified flannel pajamas, holding a bowl of cereal. His fingernails were long and scratched me a little when we shook hands. He led me upstairs into his grey, sparse apartment with all metal details and a coarse rug. The living room was totally filled with boxes of papers but every surface was bare. In the kitchen he stood behind the island counter while I stood on the other side of it as he interviewed me. He wanted to know what I studied in college and what I've done for work in the past, basic stuff. He asked if I've ever modeled and commented on my nice figure. I was becoming more and more uncomfortable as he began to make observations about my bone structure and began outlining his estimation of my racial background. My neck stiffened as I began to feel like he was reading out of a Eugenics textbook. He seemed giddy.

"You have wide cheekbones, are you Eastern European? Polish? But you've got narrow set eyes, too."

He saw my long jaw but my mother always said it was elongated by dental work.

He asked me to turn around and that was definitely when I considered that there was something unacceptably fucked about him, but still hesitant about running down the stairs because I needed money so badly, I was completely broke. I still did it, rotating carefully seeing how every picture hung in the room was black and white along with a law degree awarded from some Ivy League and the dark grey trim on the doorways and windows. The light diffused through gauzy curtains and when I made a full circle and faced him again he had put down his bowl of bran cereal and was nodding approvingly.

"You are a Cascade. Do you know what that means?"

"Excuse me?"

"A Cascade. There are Rapids and Cascades. You're a Cascade for sure."

I just blinked.

What was this joker talking about

"Here, let me show you."

He led me into the adjoining bedroom, also grey, the bed made sharply, a row of plastic tubs full of paper and magazines and catalogues spilled out from the wall.

"See, here."

He pointed to a waspy girl in a Banana Republic catalogue. She had milky white skin and cornflower eyes. The picture was taken so she looked wistfully off into the distance while holding the book she was reading open with just her pointer finger while she contemplated, we are to assume, the condescension of Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* as she hoped for Elizabeth's intellect to kick in, say, or whether to take study abroad. He thumbed through a bit

and found another one.

"Oh and her. She's a classic Cascade."

This one was looking right at us, blonde wavy hair and a smart neckline, pearl earrings and a fucking sweater tied around her shoulders.

Okay dude, I get it.

He was in a world of fantasy where all the girls are pretty and educated and interested in stocks. But it continued.

"And here is a Rapid."

Now he had opened a Maxim magazine and found a cheekier specimen, some young actress with her tits everywhere and a randy expression.

"It's those long dangly earrings and luscious lips. Definitely a Rapid. You would never dress like that, would you?"

I couldn't tell if he was actually interested in the real answer. Was it more important to him that he believe that I was some upper class pure-bred fortunate daughter with a future, or that I truly fit the requirements?

We were slipping in to the later end of 45 minutes of me being there as he showed me examples of the virgin/whore dichotomy, only it wasn't even about purity or virgin status so much as some kind of race fetish with a first class plane ticket stub. I felt like I was IN the feminist nightmare, watching him lick his lips and hear his long fingernails scratch the slippery pages. Was I really passing? Is this where white privilege gets me?

"Do you think you understand?"

I couldn't believe he was asking me that.

"Um, yes sir. I get it."

"You are certain?"

Pause

"I'm sorry. What does any of this have to do with typing?"

"Aah. I'll show you."

In another bedroom was the office. His computer was from the ice age, the screen warbled when you sat in front of it.

"This will be your workspace here. I'm also going to be doing my work at the other desk."

"But what am I going to be typing?"

He was only offering \$10 an hour, it felt suffocating only being there an hour so far. Was I going to be paid for this humiliating interview?

He led me then into the living room and opened one of the boxes and pulled out a Hustler from the 50's. Beneath that I saw more and possibly a Playboy or a Penthouse.

"What I want you to do is go through all of my periodicals and catalogue every girl in them in my database with the page number and whether she's a Cascade or Rapid."

I looked at the rows and rows of boxes. He must have had a good thousand magazines. He wanted me to look through his porn and catalogue it?

I looked straight at him. He was serious. A cool wave of fear tingled down my back and my legs. I slowly backed away from him and to the stairwell.

"I don't think I'm the typist you're looking for."

"But you're perfect. You're just what I'm looking for."

"No. I'm really not."

With this I bolted for the stairs and got out my keys. I was tripping over myself and actually feared that I would be locked in. I was so stressed out trying to unlock my bike I dropped the keys twice. I kept looking back, fearing he would be after me. I didn't feel safe until I was around the corner and up the block to Thayer street, where I ran into Chip. He asked me how I was and I blurted out:

"I just escaped a demented pervert!"

He bought me a slice of pizza and it was the best, and last, I've had.

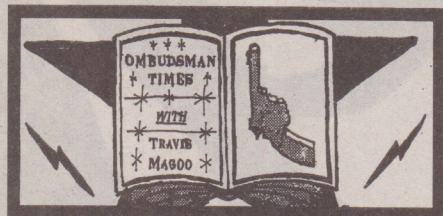
You may be sitting there asking "Wait. So you passed up a chance to get paid to look at porn?" And if you are, well, I guess the answer is yes. Now I sort of wish I had sat there and said "I'll create your database for a flat fee of five thousand dollars, and I'll work from my house." I mean, I could just go back to the job where I let people condescend to me all day because I'm a clerk. At least in this situation, I would have been able to dress how I want to, and possibly make demands of my own. What I'm getting at is, aren't we all condescended to by lechers enacting their fantasies out on us all the time anyway? I maintain that I feel a little bit safer around people whose deviances and vices are overt as opposed to duplicitously concealed.

What I still don't get is why he'd need a "Cascade" to do this work he needed done, why he'd get off on having his idea of a pure girl looking through his dirty magazines. Maybe my problem is knowing that Virginia Woolf would probably be catalogued as a Cascade and considered herself proud to be so. I'm not even against porn, I'm just against being made out to be someone I'm not, as well as the false advertising. He could have just been PLAIN about wanting to pay someone to act out a fantasy for him, he'd probably find exactly what he is looking for and an equal exchange could be set up. I might have been willing to do it if it was a fair wage and I had more control over my work environment. Typewriter, please.

This story first appeared in the form of my big mouth telling everyone I knew about the absolute worst job interview I've ever experienced.

The title of this column is misheard Gits lyrics.

PO Box 4985 / Berkeley, CA 94704



engaged

Retroactive continuity. Retcon. That's the term in the comics multiverse for when variant storylines are eliminated in favor of a single, squashed version of history. Analogous to presidential libraries and the fight over access to of-

ficial papers. In all scenarios, though, I believe there are prescient flashes (akin to the flicker of light that shows you the right way in 80s video game *Dragon's Lair*).

This summer I didn't travel with bands the way I have in years past. Instead I went to some art openings for friends. Or their birthday parties. Do not be bound by vans and temperamental musical equipment; instead, continue the lessons of basement styles, first person testimony, and controlling the means and methods of transmission. These don't change. Seeing good friends mix work, school, art, love amidst the unceasing desire to have awesome events was imminently inspiring.

The summer before last I was on the last r3 tour. We were with Against Me! in Western Europe when they played "Americans Abroad." Hearing this song during wartime was the same sort of acknowledging criticism. Indeed, wherever we go, Coca-Cola's already been. Awareness of ironies and inconsistencies doesn't excuse them, or let us jump fence, baggies of cocaine in hand. Again, can we critique and support each other as we move further from shore?

Music remains the easiest lens to filter through these questions of love & hate, redemption and betrayal. I think mostly of junior high. Sixth grade gym class. The other dorky kid with glasses is telling me not to worry about the repeated insults we're both getting. Instead, he says, I should check out this band called DEVO. "*They're like spies. They're like us, but they're actually making fun of everyone else... to their face!*" This sounds ideal but I have no idea how to access these transgressive songs, so I forget about it for years.

Later that same year in music class, I get another flash of truth that I'm only now realizing. I was again frustrated at my ability to not fit in when the non-white kid next to me says, "*Travis, you have it so easy. You don't get it. I grew up in Vietnam—I can't fit in here. But you could, you know, lose weight & get contacts. Buy cooler clothes and you're fine. But I'm never going to pass.*" I didn't really grasp the entirety of what he was saying, only the impassioned quality to his voice, the tone that sounded more like truth than anything I'd learned in school. Then the music teacher told me I didn't have rhythm enough to play drums.

The answers relate somehow to the quick sands of overexposure, misinterpretation and snobbery. Cheapening versus glorifying. The way that Mountain Goats (or Lungfish) bootlegs remain a mixed blessing. Redemptive for the things John says, his song explanations, his choice of covers. But the audience's overeager laughter? The sound of dude's high-fiving to male-narrated breakup songs? When he says an album was almost named after a dark arts form from Africa, the audience laughter is unbearable. Like, "*He's so crazy! He even references non-American things! We're so cool to be here listening to this normal-looking but totally-intense guy! Sing that song with the Hail Satan' chorus!*" What's your take on his cover of Robert Johnson's "Hellhound on my Trail?"

When I say I love Sun Ra & his Arkestra, it's

not just the music. It's the homemade, resplendid costumes. The complete abandonment of earthly concerns for the science fiction consolation of space. How the Arkestra lived collectively and painted their own record jackets. His lifetime commitment. His refusal to fight in World War II. I respect the man as an artist. But am I that different from less-cautious consumers who dig his freaky-style?

There's no shortage of examples, the path thornier as you consider race, class and dissemination. Wesley Willis on college radio stations. The dude who sells Daniel Johnston's paintings. How the first thing I heard about Deerhoof was, "It's crazy. Like this Japanese teenage girl and a guy with Tourettes playing drums." What are we really saying when we talk about the things we love?

History, narrative and conclusions remain hotly contested areas. Rightly so. What did you think of *American Hardcore*? *Our Band Could Be Your Life*? *Outlaws of America*? The recent riot grrl documentary? Puma and Vice Magazine's guide to fixed gear bike riding? The ongoing governmental reportbacks on Iraq? Amidst countless streams of counter-narratives, will our stories survive? I know this—our versions don't stand a chance in hell if they don't exist and they're not out there in the ether.

When I think of resistance and our chances, I think mostly of Hope's decimating laugh. How years and years of sarcasm has sharpened our wit to a diamantine edge that cleaves the world's brutality into two halves of lost intentions and we pass, ninja-like, through them both.

jams: the New Bloods 7"; Konono No.1 - Congotronics; Second Story Window - 12"; Belle & Sebastian's polite brutality; Joe McPhee - Nation Time; SUNN & Boris - Altar; all the bands at the Ark blowout but especially Fiya; Thrones - all; Ampere/Diatro live; Brainstorm live; Sun Ra.

words: The Handmaid's Tale - Margaret Atwood; Nirvana - Everett True; Twelve O'Clock Stories - Wanda Coleman; King Cat Classix - John Porcellino; A Man of the People - Chinua Achebe; I Shall Destroy All the Civilized Planets - Fletcher Hanks; Too Loud a Solitude - Bohumil Hrabal; Spook Country - William S. Gibson. McSweeney's Book of Poets Picking Poets.

much love to Arwen, Mary, Julia, Fil, Gloria, the Pipe Bomb, Japanther & both Mikes for making it to the last Ark shows.

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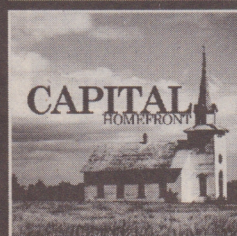


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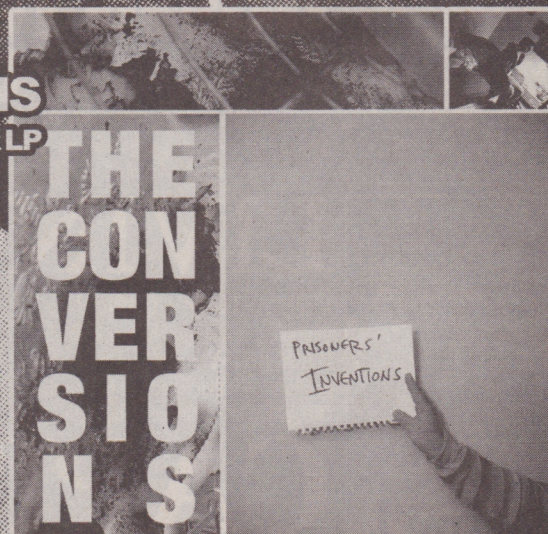
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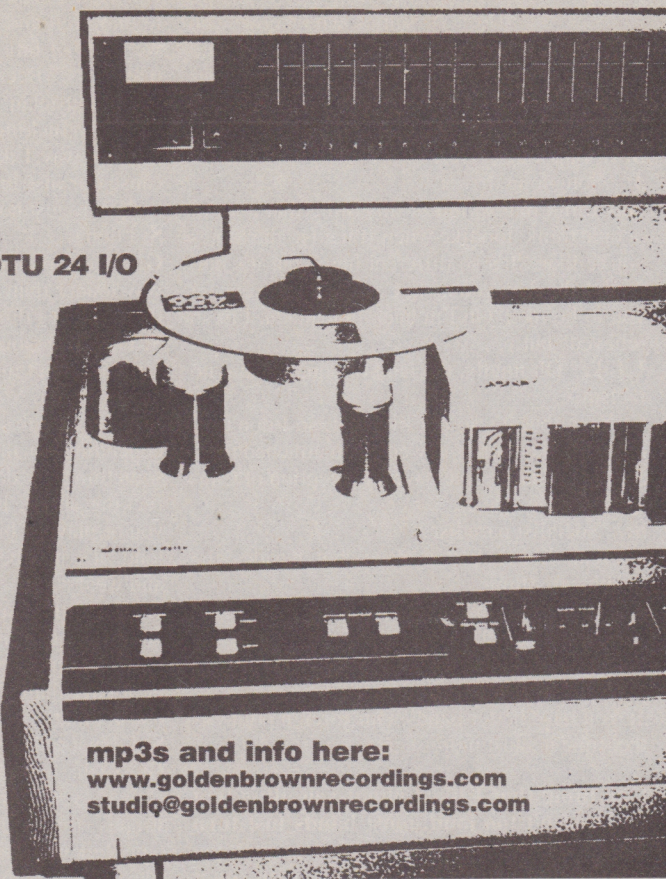
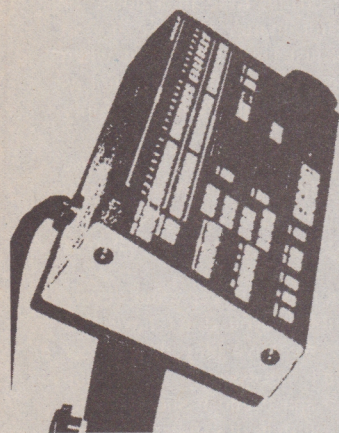
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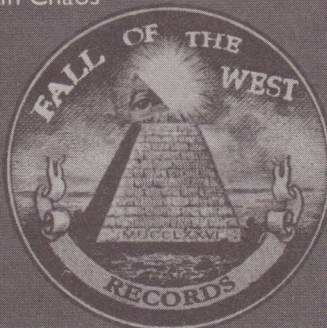
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MARGARET

Margaret Thrasher, from Vancouver, BC, are a band that just really grabbed me live—without having heard their 7"s. Their set was short, abrasive, and ugly, yet filled with punk hooks. At the time of this interview they were about four weeks into a six-week tour. Finally, after seeing them three times, I decided to take a bus up to NY to have this conversation with them before they crossed back over the border. Interview and photos by Fil

*Juls: vocals
Skidge: guitar
Anne: bass
Gabriela: drums*

Do you have strong opinions about Margaret Thatcher or do you just think it's a funny band name?

(Laughs)

Gabriela: Both. (Laughs)

Juls: Both, definitely.

G: It's a terrible name.

J: It's like a funny pun... I guess I just have this thing about women politicians. I just... I think the idea that those types of women in power is considered progress for feminism is just really funny to me. So that's why I was particularly attracted to it. She was a shitty prime minister, but I think all prime ministers are shitty.

After touring around the US and being almost out of it, do you all feel any sense of relief about crossing over the border and going back home?

J: Nooooo. Gas is twice as expensive and the drive between cities is soooooo far. I mean, in one way, oh we might like break our arm and it will be awesome to be in Canada because of health care, but...

Skidge: I'm stoked to play in Montreal.

J: Yeah, I'm really stoked to play in Montreal and Toronto and Ottawa, because I feel like in some ways the Canadian content radio laws have benefited us and we also have lots of friends in

those cities who know who we are as people and as a band. We're excited to play for them and they're excited to see us and we've never played in those cities before. I think that'll be fun, but otherwise no.

S: ...long long drives.

J: ...long long drives.

G: I think that's kind of this thing that a lot of people think, too, like when you go to the States you're like, "It's so different here" but it's not. And then when you go to Canada people expect you to be like "Oh I'm back in Canada, I'm so relieved" but...

J: Like "Oh finally, the land of equality and no racism."

G: Yeah, but it's so not like that, so I don't really feel like there's any emotion attached to it.

J: I think that people have a perception of Canada as being like a...

S: ...socialist paradise.

J: Yeah like a better place, but besides the health care thing...

S: I feel like Americans in every town ask, "What do you think of America?" and when you're like "Oh, it's pretty cool!" they're like "What? I thought you'd hate it!"

J: You have better bands. Our foreign policy is the same it's just more secret.

One thing that I liked about you all is that you weren't too loud, most bands just turn up all the way and everything is just too muddy and distorted to hear, but with you it was just as intense, but I could still follow all of the guitars and hear what was going on.

G: But don't you think we would be louder if I could be louder? It has a lot to do with me.

Why?

J: What about me?

Anne: I can't be louder.

G: I don't know. I think if I played louder, which I actually don't physically think I can do, we could probably be a bit louder, in general.

J: I feel like that applies to me too. Especially playing basement shows without very good PAs.

G: Yeah, it's hard for you to be loud, too.

Why do you think people always want to be louder?

G: Ugh, because it's like harder or angrier to be louder right? So if you're quieter, I think in a lot of people's eyes you are a more pathetic version of that previous loud-band. That's actually something that I've noticed on tour or playing shows. We're kind of, more or less the quietest band and that makes me really self-conscious because I don't like that idea, because there's this expectation that everyone should always be super fucking loud.

J: But it seems so like: Girls. Quieter.

G: Totally, it goes hand in hand.

So that's why I feel like it's that much more self-conscious, because everyone expects girls not to play well and for girls to be quiet. But when we kind of fall into that, it's like "Uggghhhh, that sucks!" Because you want to be a very proficient musician, and be a girl; and you want to be really fucking loud, and be a girl. I always feel that way. Like we're never good enough because our instrument playing is not astounding and we're just not that loud.

S: I don't...

G: So even some shitty-ass band... they'll be way louder than us. I don't think they're better than us, but I think people equate...

S: I don't see loudness being better.

G: No, I don't think so either, but I think that's how it's seen.

S: I don't think so at all. I just like to be louder depending on the setting. Like in a house or something, it doesn't matter because it's so fucking small. It's just right there. But when you're playing bigger places and you're not as loud, it's just because it sounds really empty and weak.

G: Yeah, that's true, but then it sucks because you want to have that choice. Whether you play in a larger venue, you want to be able to be louder than if you play in a house where it doesn't matter.

S: I'd just rather not play in larger venues ever.

G: Yeah, but obviously you don't have that choice every time. We have played in larger venues that weren't necessarily straight-up empty, it was just a space and it sucks to feel like we fall short of that. It's not about our songs, it's about how we sound that bums me out sometimes. But then you always have to remind yourself that it's not a contest and you just have to be comfortable with what you do.

J: And we have shitty equipment because we're punks!

S: Whatever, my amp kicks ass! Don't talk shit on that.

Do you think of your sound as being retro?

S: Not really. I guess kind of, but not really.

A: I guess I can see that.

S: I definitely listen to a lot of old stuff.

Do you feel like it's more influenced by older bands?

S: Yeah, I think more older bands, but it's also influenced by newer bands and not necessarily punk bands even.

J: And I think we all have different influences. Definitely what Skidge is influenced by and what I'm influenced by are really different and it just comes together.

I guess I was mostly thinking about the guitars.

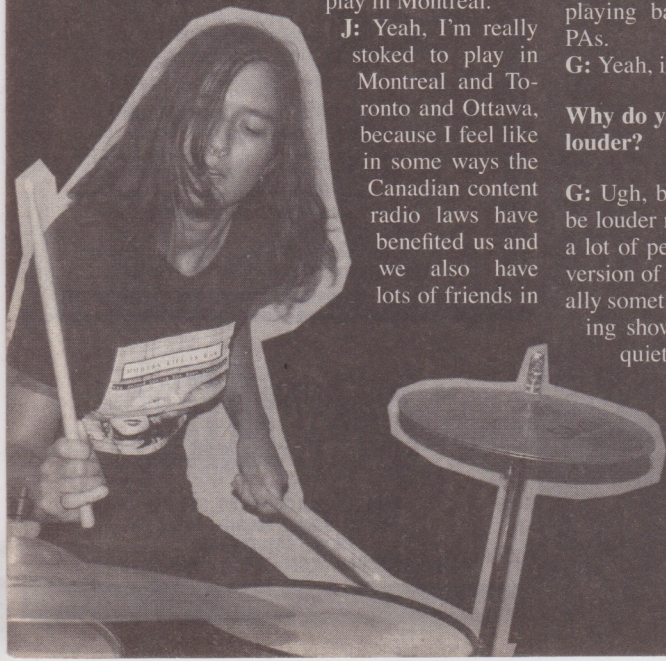
G: (to Skidge) I've heard you talk about that in relationship to the sound.

S: The tone?

G: yeah, the tone...

S: We haven't played with the proper tone in years! Since that Red Bear broke.

G: Well, you can get over that any second now.



(Laughs)

S: What?

G: I said... you can get over that... any second now.

S: Why would I get over it?

G: Because there's no point in dwelling on the Red Bear. It's dead.

S: No it isn't. It's just broken.

What have you all learned from this tour so far?

G: Are you kidding? I learn something new everyday; that's my motto.

(laughs)

I actually do. Seriously. As corny as that sounds. ...I learned how to play drums better. (laughs)

S: I've learned that there's too many power violence bands in America. (Laughs)

J: I learned today that at the venue we played at in Tuscon, Skrappy's, someone was shot and killed there in an FSU brawl in 2005.

G: That's pretty crazy. Wait you want like...

J: Oh, like personal revelations... I think I really need to go home and be by myself for a few days before I can think about that. ...I've learned that I need to take a lot of iron to stay in stable mental state.

A: What have you learned Skidge?

S: I've learned that everyone in my band is really slow at everything.

G: I'm not that slow.

J: It's just groups, you know?

A: I could be even slower. (Laughs) I was ready before you this morning. First time of the tour.

G: I think an important thing that I've learned too, is that it takes a considerable amount of effort—even though you meet people—to be able to make your meeting with them somewhat meaningful. I think that's something you have to learn. It doesn't come naturally, at least to many people, I think, for different reasons. I think that if it's important to you to have some sort of non-shallow interaction with people then you have to learn how to engage them. Learning how to talk to people and make that mean something. Because you can't really depend on a lot of people to take that initiative. If you want it to happen you have to make it happen. It's not really up to anyone but you, how your time happens.

J: Well, I also agree that it takes effort to meet people and I guess that's why I don't have that much fun on tour, because often after shows I just feel too fucked up and self-conscious to try to engage someone in a non-superficial conversation that isn't just like "Oh good set." "Oh, thanks." And in a lot of ways I would like to have those interactions, but I'm just really in no position to instigate them, at all.

It seems like there's this weird line between being in a hardcore band where you're talking about things that really bother you and people sometimes just viewing it as entertainment, being like "Oh good job, you all did good." Uuuuuugggghhh.

J: How are you gonna write out the "Uuuuuugggghhh" sound.

**I'm not.
I'm gonna
edit that
out.**

(Laughs)

G: I mean you don't always go to shows just to be in this crazy emotional state with a band. Sometimes you just watch bands and you're like *I don't know what they're saying, but the music is so good.* I don't think

it always has to be about what you feel. You can just be like *this sounds good.* Or, *I like this because this is really important to my life—seeing hardcore punk bands.* So that's where that argument about entertainment comes in, but I don't think that's always a bad thing. It's not like entertainment equals a negative experience. It's just that you're having fun.

J: Yeah, and with us, obviously if my intention was only to be emotionally engaging and intense than I wouldn't be in a band I would just write zines like I used to. Just the music—apart from what I'm saying and the implications and the politics of that—the music is also really important to me. I know that people don't know what I'm singing, especially if they haven't heard us or if they don't have our records. I don't expect that. I'm just expressing my vulnerability, I guess, and how that makes me feel. And no one is under any obligation to react.

Some of your songs openly address issues that are difficult to deal with on their own, not to mention in public, and in general I think punks are encouraged to feel entitled to ask a band about their lyrics, so does it make you nervous to think that at a show someone could come up and try to talk to you about things that might be intensely personal?

J: Yeah, and that's actually happened to me before. Where... it wasn't about my lyrics, it was about a zine. A person that I'm really good friends with just came up to me at a show and they were like "I really liked your zine; I was also sexually abused." And that's awesome that they could share that, but I

can't really deal with talking and thinking about that at all times, so it was kind of intense. So while I would love it if people asked me about my lyrics, I know that there are times when it would really suck if people asked me about my lyrics.

I also think that a lot of punk is about finding an outlet to express your frustrations, but I often wonder if when you write a lot of songs about all the shit that pisses you off, do you feel any negative effects of being in a situation—like on tour—where you play those songs over and over and you're forced to revisit all that shit on a daily basis?

J: Um, yeah. I guess that's a good point and I guess I haven't really thought about that, but it probably is like one of the reasons why I just feel kind of like intensely vulnerable all the time on tour. It's really hard for me to connect with people, or talk to people. And just not getting my own space. And often being in these like intensely male-dominated spaces, too. It hasn't been entirely so, but I feel like a lot on this tour we've just stayed with mostly males and had our shows booked by males and been in really male-dominated audiences and lacking any "safe spaces," as cheesy as that sounds. But not that I regret doing this or anything. I feel it's pretty valuable, for myself, to do this tour and on a lot of levels it's a lot of fun and I really like playing shows—it's like my favorite thing in the world. But yeah I haven't thought about how that is probably why I'm kind of miserable all the time on tour.

G: Or do you think that because you do it everyday, you don't really even think about it or you get used to it? You're like *Oh, it's this song, it's this song, it's this song.*

TED & SHEP

And it becomes like song one, two and three as opposed to that song about that and that song about that.

J: It goes back and forth. On one hand I could really think about my lyrics when I'm yelling and just feel really intense, or I could just not think about it at all, but then that is also like... crazy. That's fucked up because it just makes tour into this mundane routine where I'm like, *Why am I driving so long everyday and just like spending twenty-three hours a day waiting to set up and then yell for ten minutes and then pack away all our equipment and just wait to go to the next place to do it again?*

G: I've thought about this a lot, where you see a band and the lyrics are really intense and there's this emotion pouring out of that person, right in front of you. But then the conversations I've had with people who sing in bands or play in bands, they're sometimes at a point where it becomes more of a performance of that emotion and I don't know if I think that's good or bad. But I think people who do it a lot end up repeating those actions over and over. And even though the song is really personal at the time they wrote it, it still may or may not mean something to them, but they still have to perform that song, right? I don't think you can always feel that emotion for every single song at every single show because you would probably die. You know what I mean? If you had to go through that process every single time it wouldn't work. So what happens, I think, is that it ends up becoming like you're just showing that emotion, because it's kind of what people... it's kind of what you want to do, but it's also what people expect, because it would suck if that person just stood there and was like *I don't really feel that pissed off, but I'm going to make myself pissed off.*

J: Did you say that I will probably die?

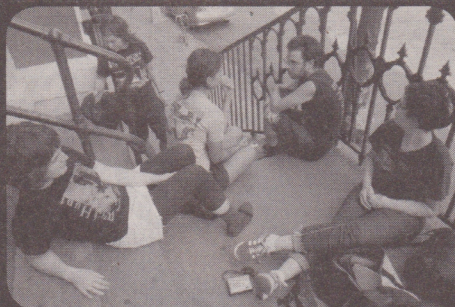
G: Cause actually, sorry, this is gonna be a long-winded response, but remember when we saw Dangers play? And the dude was like

feel that emotion anymore, but I've never been in that position, so I can't really judge.

J: But you have sung in a band before...

G: Yeah, for like two seconds. But do you know what I'm saying? Does that make sense?

J: Just ask the next question. (Laughs)



Are there current bands that you have been playing with on tour or otherwise that you are inspired by or feel connected to?

G: Yeah definitely.

J: I really liked playing with Dangers. I like that band a lot. I feel like they have good things to say.

G: Yeah, that's a good one. I'd agree with you. I think when we played with Screaming Females that was awesome.

A: That was a really good show.

G: Because they were fucking crazy. That was pretty inspiring. Just everything about it, musically, vocally...

J: We played this really weird show in Las Cruces where there were a total of like six touring bands who all happened to just be in that city on that one day, coming from different directions. We all ended up playing at this house that we got on through these kids we met at the food co-op when we were passing through. Maybe like twenty people came. It was mostly the bands watching the bands, but it was an incredibly good show. All the bands were good. And there were just lots of really rad women musicians, which was good because it was challenging to me. There were lots of other really good women screamers, I guess. All in all it was a really good show and inspiring.

G: And also when we played with Bruise Violet, because I had never seen them before. I thought they were awesome and the drummer I thought was really good, too. That's always good for me because I like to see people who are either like... Well I like to see women drummers anyway, but when they're like on my level or better than me it's exciting because I can learn from that. I can learn from dude drummers, too, and I do pay attention, but it was just really cool to see. And actually when we played in Philadelphia every single drummer was a woman drummer and that was awesome because they just progressively got way sicker as the night went on. There was me, and then there was that girl in that band...

J: Screaming Rhinestone Eagle...

A: No, Purple Rhinestone Eagle.

G: Purple Rhinestone Eagle. She was pretty good. And then the next one was probably in her thirties and she was rad. Then the next one was like in her forties, nearing fifties, and she

was like fucking crazy. So it was just awesome to see. That shit's pretty inspiring...

J: ummm...

G: Emphasis on shit. (Laughs)

J: That SHIT was inspiring. (Laughs) We played a few shows with La Piovra which is really fun because they seemed to have a lot of interpersonal problems on their tour too. Not that we have a lot of interpersonal problems, but it was just funny to see them and see all their bullshit, but then they would still put on an incredibly rad show. It was cool to hang out with them. Just these fun Italian dudes that we got to hang out with for three nights. I liked it because we played with them three times and I felt like we actually got to know them a bit.

How do you deal with your interpersonal problems?

G: Oh, I don't want to talk about that. (Laughs)

G: I really don't...

J: Yeah, there are bands that are way worse and bands that end up breaking up after tour. And I don't think we're gonna break up after this tour. I think it's just mostly me and not getting enough personal space. Because it's kind of like dumb and emotional for me on this tour, I really just need time not being in a room with my band or at a party after the show. When I don't get that I start going a little crazy and I feel like I've had a lot of health problems. (Note from Juls: Yeah, I was diagnosed with Pelvic Inflammatory Disease when I got home.)

I think it's really hard on tour to have any kind of alone time.

J: Yeah.

Like no matter what mood you're in, somebody wants to have an eighties dance party after the show.



J: And sometimes I LOVE eighties dance parties.

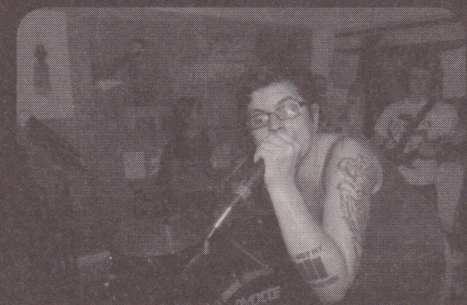
S: On a different tour. The show just turned into a crazy party right afterwards and the whole band was so tired and we were just like "Oh fuck." We wanted to go to bed so bad. But then the cops showed up right away and I was never so happy to see the cops. We were all just like "Yeah cops! Let's go to sleep!"

J: Yayyy...

G: Don't print that.

J: No, print that. Skidge loves cops!

S: I do when they get me sleepin'.



standing there and he's like, he's kind of talking to his bandmates and he's getting ready and everyone's... they're just about to play in a minute. He's getting ready to sing or whatever and he's like, "It's kind of funny how I'm in this really awesome mood, but in like two seconds I'm gonna be like so fucking pissed off." And I was like "Really?" because in my mind I was like, *yeah, it might do that to you where you just get super angry or you might just fake your anger and fake your set.* I'm not going to argue one way whether I think that's good or bad because I think that happens a lot, but sometimes I feel like *oh why would you do this if you don't*

ULTRA DOLPHINS

Ultra Dolphins is a frenzied, manic punk outfit from Richmond and New York City—yes, these days, you can pull that off. The band met and formed at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. They have toured the U.S. and Europe relentlessly. They are a staple in the legacy of bands from Virginia that challenge form and style. Their most recent release is Mar on Robotic Empire. I spoke with them after the infamous Best Friends Day in Richmond.

Interview by Katy Otto

Photos by Dave Sanders

How do you make this band work long distance?

Nate: In all seriousness, it definitely poses some major challenges. We have learned to roll with the punches. Above all, we just stay good friends.

Frayser: Before, when we lived in the same place, we thought a band couldn't stay together if members lived in different places. There was some uneasiness when people moved away from Philadelphia after a year or two of being in the band. But it actually ended up being better, making the band not be our central focus in life.

N: I think we are stronger and better friends because of it.

Tim: I kind of like working with the weird deadlines. Like, we are leaving for tour in four days and we have no new songs and we don't know the old ones, so we are gonna practice four hours a day.

F: There are a few times in the year when it is crunch time.

T: We hunker down.

F: Otherwise, it gets old really fast because you are seeing each other all of the time.

N: It is important for this band and for us as individuals to have lots of other things going on in our lives. This is a good and cathartic part, but it is not the only thing.

How did the distance affect the song writing on your last record?

T: In the hunkering down when we were writing for *Mar*, we had to do a lot of songwriting on the fly.

N: I sequestered myself for a while. I was having a mental breakdown of sorts. I was in upstate New York, and there was a piano. It was in my grandmother's house when she died and my uncle took it. He and his present wife invited me to stay with them. It's western New York in a bizarre place called Chitaqua. It is a seasonal place—in the summer it's real crazy and during the rest of the year there is nobody there. It is close to Lake Erie. I spent a lot of time getting ideas.

T: I was kind of sequestered too in the basement of my parents' house in northern Virginia. That is a kind of seclusion—living in Herndon definitely has its loneliness. Nate and I were both jamming alone with a piano and we would get together and share ideas. Some of the ground-

work was really laid when Nate visited me at my parents' house. We wrote Ship to Shore in Tim Westberg's bedroom that day.

N: Things came together very quickly.

F: The excitement—of finally being together when we weren't—fueled a faster pace of writing songs.

N: A lot of it actually came together in the studio. We didn't have much time there, but especially with the Great Neuraesthetic—we knew we wanted to do a beginning part, have drums, but we didn't know much more than that. It helped because I stayed at the studio. Laf's parents live right there and the studio is in a barn.

Who is Laf?

All: Jason LaFerrera.

Where is the studio?

N: In Mechanicsville, Virginia.

How'd you know him?

T: He's a man about town.

N: He recorded our tape.

F: He recorded VCR and Wow, Owls and Stop It!

T: He introduced himself to me at a VCR show and said we should record with him. He's currently living in Morocco teaching elementary school mathematics.

What is the biggest musical risk you all have taken as a band?

T: Nate on guitar! No, actually, recording that last record. Most of that material was untested, though. We were going into the studio and were going to see what we could do. I was scared.

Some days I thought it would be bad and not get done. Nate was more sure about it. It felt risky to me, especially because the recording was being paid for by Robotic Empire.

N: We did a lot of noodling and spent a lot of time setting up weird auxiliary drum kits in the barn. There was some improvising going on, which I enjoy because it keeps it exciting.

T: It was one of the coolest things we ever did, and we are proud of it. Our recent tour to Europe was a big risk too. We didn't know the band we were going with or the guy booking it. We didn't get our tickets until three days before we were supposed to go. I was a nervous nelly!

F: It turned out perfectly though.

T: Huge risk, huge reward. Fortune and glory.

N: Life is one big risk, man; just walking down the street, you can get hit, you know...

T: You can't live your life that way.

What are factors in your respective communities/home environments that either encourage or deter you from making music?

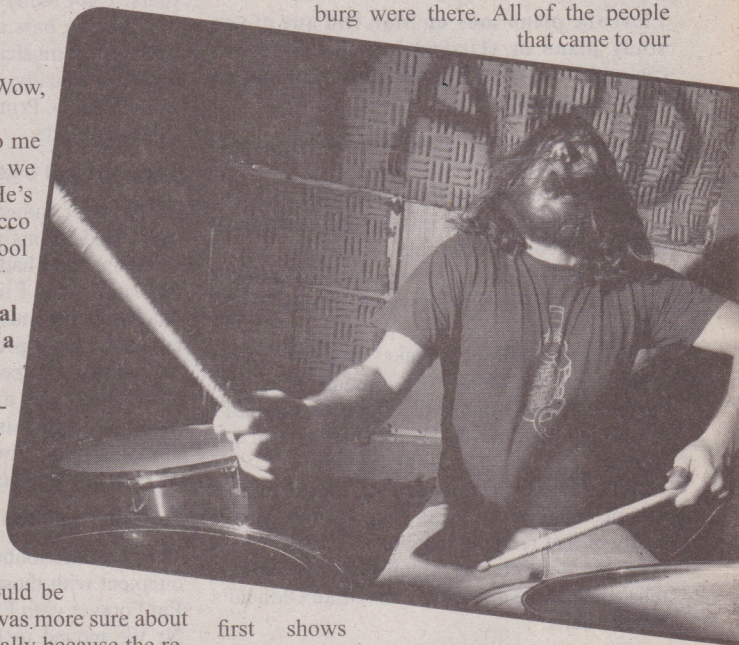
F: Low rent is a big plus.

T: High rent is a deterrent. Living in Brooklyn makes it hard to get away.

N: I was living in western New York making puppets. For around two years my work was centered around art—making puppets, restoring puppets, doing puppet shows, and teaching kids the art of puppeteering. So, my life was centered around art for a time. I would definitely say our friends and families encourage us. We have so many friends who are incredible artists. I get a lot of influence from my father in this respect as well because he is an ornithologist, a research scientist who studies birds. I have memories from way back of him taxidermying birds, and, in some weird way, that might have led to me making puppets. Just studying and being around that sort of thing was very encouraging.

F: Our friends are probably the biggest reason we keep doing it.

T: Tonight, all of our friends from Harrisonburg were there. All of the people that came to our



first shows still come out and that is majorly encouraging.

N: There was a lot of great energy when we started in Harrisonburg—we'd have 20 people sometimes just banging on stuff. We just wanted people to get excited about it, and we didn't even have to push for it.

F: When we first went on tour, we had an entourage of friends follow in their cars for their spring break. We never knew where we would all stay, but it was the best time ever.

N: That momentum has carried us for sure.

Do you consider yourself a punk band? Why or why not?

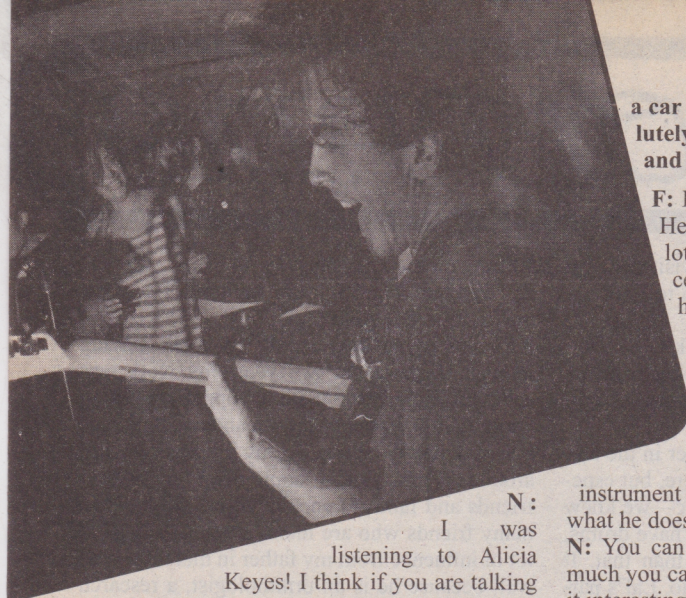
F: Yes.

T: Totally.

N: I guess so. I don't know.

T: I was listening to Mission of Burma last week.

F: I was listening to Nelly Furtado.



a car exhaust pipe system. She is absolutely amazing. What genres of music and individual artists inspire you?

F: I love Keith Moon. I can't deny it. He had a lot of toms and used 'em a lot. He was in one of the most successful rock bands in the world and he still didn't care about keeping a straight beat. He just wanted to have fun. The Who was good, but they are annoying, too. If you ever saw him live, he didn't care about playing the same beat or "right" all the time. No matter what instrument you play, you should be inspired by what he does.

N: You can have talent, but there is only so much you can do with talent. You have to make it interesting for yourself.

T: I've been feeling David Bowie these days.

The Labyrinth soundtrack! I'm not even kidding.

T: He is able to continually reinvent himself.

N: I have to be more general about it. I have gotten pretty eclectic in my tastes over the years. I got really into jazz for a while, and I was playing bass at the time. This was important for my musical understanding and finding myself musically—I was listening to Red Hot Chili Peppers, Primus, Nine Inch Nails, Fugazi, Depeche Mode.

These are not bad bands.

N: A lot of industrial stuff—Meatbeat Manifesto. Bad Brains was absolutely huge for me. I was ten and I had an older brother feeding me this stuff. Now I have a friend, Tim Westberg, who feeds me music. He is an incredible musician and I have gotten to play music with him a lot. He takes it upon himself to make mix CDs. He did one every month this past year and sends them out to friends. He is incredibly prolific—always writing, always playing.

T: He's an influence on all of us.

How do you know him?

T: From Harrisonburg. He was in Clap Clap Excitement with those two dudes. He was also in Eat Forever with Frayser.

N: We moved to Philadelphia with him for a time.

How did you decide to write the song about a dog's nightmare?

F: Tim and I lived at separate times and together in a house with our friend Jay who has owned a dog named William for the past two or three years. This dog was found by a guy named Ian dumpster diving. He had a muzzle on him. He was a weiner dog and a runt.

T: They are called dachshunds!

F: He was in bad shape, so our friend Jay, who is in a band called Brainworms, took William from Ian and nursed him back to health. He used to hate all males and only like females. He had been beaten and abandoned. The vet said he was raised for breeding, probably in a very small cage. We can't even know what William has been through. He is a good dog and

well adjusted but the remnant of his past life is that he has night terrors. This will happen at 7am or in the middle of the day. Jay asked about it and the vet said "night terrors." The song is about what William might be dreaming about, because we had wondered about it. The song is about Jay and William and how Jay is William's source of consolation and safety in his terrified, tortured world.

What do you think the single biggest threat to independent music today is?

F: Comfort and convenience.

T: I think this growing idea of professionalism in music is big. People making their bands into a business...

N: I helped out a band for a bit that was like that. I knew at the time that it was not something that I felt within me. This band called me the day before they were going in to record an album at a studio, Q Recordings, where Bad Brains recorded in northern Virginia. Making music your life would be hell to me. Nirvana was doing so much touring—whether it was imposed upon them or not, they were doing it, and that can be depressing. I think it takes the love out of it. I wanted to go to school for music, but right now I can use it instead as a place to get ideas out. I don't really know what I am doing in terms of technical stuff. I feel though that if I got into that, it would take the pleasure away.

T: The music industry seems to be designed to homogenize music. It is very genre-oriented, and companies seek to make easily packaged projects. It kills any kind of creativity individual artists might have. The idea that music is something that should be consumed, bought and sold is scary.

N: There are so many other societies where everyone plays music and it is used as a tool for expression and that is that. It is important to remember that and hold on to that.

F: Money is a part of what we do; it is an essential part to help us do what we do because we play a lot. But it can exist on an independent level...

T: Local economies!

F: There is a network that makes it possible to exist on any level you are comfortable with if you want to be a band. People like the idea of being in a band; some people [like the idea] more than they like actually being in a band.

T: It blows my mind that people get together to make music who aren't even friends sometimes. To me, it is essential.

N:

I was listening to Alicia

Keyes! I think if you are talking about the spirit, then yes, we are punk.

F: I think the punks are the ones that run away from what everybody else thinks of as punk.

T: Like Mission of Burma!

N: And the Minutemen.

T: I really feel a strong kinship to those SST bands from the 80s. Black Flag, the Descendents, Dinosaur Jr...

I love the piano song on Mar. Did any of you study piano or classical instruments growing up? If so, what influence has that had on your music today?

T: I took six years of piano lessons when I was a kid, but I forgot all of it.

N: I had a very similar thing happen. I took lessons for a short amount of time and I only have scattered recollections of it.

T: Nate, did you learn through the Suzuki method? That was the popular way to teach kids the piano at the time.

F: My mom wanted to take me in for piano lessons, but we didn't own a piano. I just had my grandfather's untuned antique, so we didn't go through with it. My brother had a drum set, though.

T: When I was in elementary school and middle school, I played the string bass. It's hard to say if any of that really influenced me.

N: A big thing for me, again from my parents, that grabbed me musically, was Mike Oldfield's tubular bells.

That is an instrument?

N: Yes, he plays like a million instruments. You know the theme from Halloween? I think they took that from one of his opuses.

T: My mom is an awesome pianist, but she would never admit it. She would put on some pretty heavy hitters, like some Beethoven or some Chopin, and sometimes she would play show tunes and stuff like that and I would sing along. She also taught me how to play guitar.

N: My brother was a huge influence on me, feeding me music when I was really young.

My favorite musician is this woman Evelyn Glennie, who is Scottish, profoundly deaf, and plays over 180 percussion instruments fluently. She goes around the world and learns all kinds of percussion styles. She builds instruments, has collaborated with Bjork, and played an entire piece of music on



PUNK SOUND ENGINEERS

It is hard to imagine a world without recording—a world without documented music. While you can read about recording with every issue of Tape Op Magazine that is published and other assorted zines and magazines, it is rare that you ever see interviews with DIY punk sound Engineers, and also interviews with women Sound Engineers. This is a collective interview done with five engineers who either do live sound, home recording, or have started their own studios.

Interview with: Will Killingsworth (Dead Air Studios), Megan March (live sound), Jack Shirley (The Atomic Garden), Steve Roche (Permanent Hearing Damage), and Kathy Cashel (studio in DC in progress).

Interview and photos by: Meghan Minior

How did you get involved in recording?

WILL: I think my story is like most people who record—I was in high school and in a band so I bought a 4-track. Then I went to college and started using their studio, helping friends' bands record, and finally, after graduating, I put together a studio in my house. I'm also fully aware that playing the type of music I do will never pay any bills, so recording is a way that I can be involved with what I love, music, and pay some bills at the same time.

MEGAN: I started doing live sound as a volunteer at the Gilman St. Project in Berkeley when I was 16. As a volunteer, I was able to learn the system through trial and error under the guidance of older punks which was really necessary for me at the time because I didn't trust anybody over 30. The booking got pretty interesting in the late 90s, which lead me to want to document the shows. My first recordings were done off the board onto ratty cassette tapes that I still have in a drawer somewhere today. Later, I studied recording techniques at Mills College in Oakland where we learned the rudiments of digital recording by editing 1/4" reel to reel tape with an exacto knife. Now I work for several rock venues in San Francisco doing front of house (FOH) and monitors.

JACK: Playing in DIY bands always means DIY recordings on some level, at least at the beginning. The reason I wanted to be the one manning the controls is because there are too many assholes out there that don't know the difference between a producer and an engineer. Just shut the fuck up and push those buttons. Stop telling me that my riff doesn't work.

STEVE: I really didn't have any idea what I was doing until I started working at a radio station as an engineer for live bands. I got a lot of practice with all kinds of music: noise and beeps from laptops to Vic Chesnutt to Khanate to World Inferno Friendship Society. Bands started to use the live recordings I did for records and then I just bought a reel to reel 8-track and started doing more "proper" recordings.

KATHY: First I got a 4-track and just messed around on my own. I wanted to record my own stuff without being self-conscious, and with-

out the money clock ticking.

Do you think going to school to learn recording is necessary?

MEGAN: No, school isn't necessary, but sound engineering does take education. I hardly use anything I learned in school, and I'm a full time professional sound engineer. I learned by soldering in speaker fuses at a punk club, and observing other engineers. A lot of recording is the ability to listen and achieve a quality sound, not how many expensive toys you used in the process.

WILL: Sometimes I wonder if there's knowledge that I could benefit from that a "real" training could have provided, but then it seems most people going to recording school don't seem to think it provides such things.

STEVE: I think if you are looking to go to school for recording, your money would be better spent getting some basic gear and cutting your teeth recording whoever will let you. There are a lot of great resources out there like Tape Op magazine and many, many books and message boards.

What have been some of your favorite/worst recording experiences?

MEGAN: I guess everybody's been there at 4am waiting for the bassist to finally play their line right for the 30th time. Or gotten through with a session and realized that your tape wasn't calibrated right. I'd rather remember dragging all of my friends into the studio to record back ups for my silly punk band. I yelled at them when the beer got too close to the mics.

WILL: I think some of my favorite times in the studio have been working with bands that are also friends and working hard on a longer project, but having a good time while doing it. This would include the likes of Daniel Striped Tiger, Ringers, Death To Tyrants, Mind Eraser, Das Oath and assorted Mark McCoy projects, etc. Worst experiences, would probably range from amps or drums breaking mid-session (although I once soldered a bass to work again which felt triumphant), to drunk bands, to funk bands spending four days in the studio, to bands who high-five over stupidly offensive lyrics, etc.

JACK: Recording bands that I'm a fan of is the coolest thing ever. I will often offer up free time to bands that I want to really be involved with. Also, recording friends is usually amazing (and equally unprofitable). As far as bad experiences, I guess when people are just unprepared it is really frustrating. They're mad because they're wasting their money and I'm mad 'cause they're wasting my time.

STEVE: Anytime I have been working with friends on a record I am excited about, it rules. A few that stand out: I recorded this band, Serpent Throne, that are friends of mine and they basically wanted it to sound like the first Black Sabbath records and I think we pretty

much hit the nail on the head. Oh, they're also fucking awesome. The Armalite LP was great to work on. Other standout fun ones: Witch Hunt's *Blood Red States*, Teeth of Mammals LP, Towers, some of the many Tom Schlatter related projects (the Assistant, In First Person, This Ship Will Sink, etc), Belegost and Fighting Dogs.

KATHY: Recording Fated Fury for the Exotic Fever HIPS compilation was great, everybody was really bringin' it musically, all talent and ideas and no egos. Also the Firing Squad single, which was also a case of the band just being all there and us not messing it up.

How much do you involve yourself in the projects you record?

MEGAN: Too much. I'm learning to appreciate letting a song "breathe" and contain live elements that show that humans played the instruments.

STEVE: I have always tried to take a back seat and let the band make their own decisions. Ultimately, it is their record and not mine. I just try to not fuck up their ideas. I always have some form of personal investment in the recordings. I mean, I am putting my own stamp on their record in some way or form and I take an enormous amount of pride in my work.

KATHY: It really depends. As recordist you're usually midwifing someone else's ideas, so you don't want to jump in the same way (creatively) you might in a band. But at the same time I really want it to sound good, and am very invested that way.

Do you have some sort of quality control on who you accept work with—do you have to like the band already?

MEGAN: In school, I only recorded friends. If I were running my own studio, I'd record my friends, their friends, and awesome people. Recording can be a very personal process which requires people working together. If there is no element of co-operation, you are doomed.

WILL: I've started turning some people down, but for the most part my interests are fairly varied and I certainly have no problem working with people I don't know yet. In fact, I've made a lot of great friends by recording their bands, which is really cool.

JACK: Unfortunately I am not of a high enough profile/economic standing to turn away any work. However, in the past there have been some super good times/recordings from bands that I thought would be a nightmare. I really have very few bad experiences in my studio.

STEVE: When a band contacts me, I always talk with them for a while just to see where they're coming from and what they plan to do. If it works with my schedule and they seem like decent people, I'm always down.

KATHY: Oh yeah. I pick and choose for

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sure—I wouldn't record a band I didn't like or people I didn't like. (Which may be why I don't have any recording horror stories to tell.)

What are some projects you most recently recorded?

WILL: I've been busy a lot with my record label, Clean Plate, and with two bands, Ampere and Failures, so I haven't been in the studio as much as usual, but recent sessions of note would be: Arts, Social Circle, Relics, Ringers, Wasteland, Aerosols, L'Antietam, Dennis, Furnace, etc...

JACK: We just finished tracking two Trainwreck songs. That was fucking awesome. That was one of the cases where the band is like family and I'm a fan of the music. Total fucking awesomeness. Other recent stuff includes: Finest Dearest, Fiction Like Non-fiction, Acts of Sedition, Grayceon, Burial Year.

STEVE: I am half-done with a split LP for In First Person. I recorded a noisy hardcore band from Philly/Allentown called Middle America, an awesome power-violence band from Brooklyn called ¡Apeshit!, and a sorta Chavez-esque band from Philly called Algebra of Need over the last couple months. I am in the midst of recording a psych/peacepunk band from Philly called Lesser Known Neutrinos. They use viola and lots of weird synths and keyboards along with rock instrumentation.

KATHY: I just wrote and recorded some music for theater: Taffety Punk's play *The Devil in His Own Words*. Before that there was my song on the EXF *Compassion Over Killing comp*, Brian Duss' band *Ibid*, and three things on the EXF *HIPS comp*.

Is this currently your only job?

JACK: yes.

MEGAN: Live sound, yes.

WILL: For the past several years it has been, although I recently started working a part-time job just to help a bit with downtimes and to have some additional, reliable income.

STEVE: Nope. It has been my main job for a stretch, but it was just too hand to mouth and I travel too much to really make that feasible at this stage in my life. Maybe again someday.

KATHY: Nope. And the truth is, I am just fine with it not being a money-making enterprise. If I were trying to make a living off of it, I probably wouldn't be able to pick and choose my projects, and would probably think of it entirely differently. As it is, it's all icing on the gravy.

What are some of the main things that you have learned in general about the recording process? What advice would you give to recorders as they approach the notion of recording music in a studio?

MEGAN: Let your ears have breaks and listen

to the play back at a low volume. Don't smoke during mixing, it changes your hearing.

WILL: One of the things that has sort of been an on-going realization is how much each individual instrument's sound can affect the perception of the other instruments around it. I know before I ever started recording I never gave a second thought to drum sound or even performance really, but now feel like it's the foundation of a mix or song. I think my advice to most bands about to record is to be more prepared than they think they need to be. I would also suggest bands practice playing through their songs without vocals, so they're not necessarily dependent on those cues when recording. Also, changing strings, new drum heads, etc., will all help you get a better sound out of a recording faster.

JACK: You have to accept the fact that you are going to be out of your element when you're recording and you've got to be prepared to deal with that. Being comfortable is the most important thing, so do whatever it takes to get there.

STEVE: Basically the band is responsible for most of how the record will sound. So practice like crazy, borrow the best sounding gear you can if yours isn't cutting it, and just have what you want going on (or as close as you can manage) when you come in. It will make it much less likely that your record will get fucked up. If you can't articulate how you want your drums to sound or how you want the guitars to sound, find a CD that got them right and bring it in for the engineer to hear.

KATHY: Ah! If I could go back in time and give myself advice, it would be to relax a little. Trust your sense of what sounds good, and enjoy it. Good vibes get recorded too, maaaaan. They really do. And of course, if you're interested, learn more about the recording process. Ask friends who are into it. And I highly recommend *Tape Op* magazine, which has a free subscription.

What do you really like in a recording, personally?

KATHY: Good music! I don't really care so much about whether the recording itself is "good"—technical mastery for its own sake is boring. There are some records that I love that sound like hell, no low end, tinny, trashy, or whatever, but the energy or musical awesomeness still communicates.

MEGAN: Textures and good tones. I appreciate a drummer with good timing, but the whole band needs to be playing together, giving the recording energy and personality.

WILL: Something perhaps worth noting that I really like in a punk recording, or any recording, is a certain sense of a lack of perfection. I think this probably exists in all albums before a certain time, but in recent years the impossibly perfect sound is becoming popular, even in underground music. Now, I don't want to hear an album that's full of mistakes or anything, hardly, but I think that ultimately having drum

hits that aren't all the same volume/sound, and having pieces of unintentional feedback, or minutely missed guitar strums is all part of what makes a recording sound human. I guess I think a little bit of chaos or randomness is good to have in a performance.

STEVE: I mostly listen for drum sounds. I guess that is what I appreciate the most about the characteristic Steve Albini sound. His recordings, and specifically his drums, sound like they were recorded in a space. They sound three dimensional. And that is something very rare on modern records and I think that gives a recording character and makes it interesting. Adding depth to mixes is so important. Especially with so many records being mixed down within a computer.

JACK: I like honest recordings. I want to hear what the band sounds like, not the studio or the engineer. This usually gets me into trouble when I'm recording 'cause I want the shitty band to sound shitty and they haven't realized they're a shitty band, yet.

What are a few of your favorite pieces of gear?

WILL: I think my favorite things are primarily outboard gear, and mainly the ones that can do things that nothing else I own can. So, those would have to be the Drawmer LX20 compressor, DBX 566 compressor, and honestly various guitar distortion pedals used as outboard effects ranging from a modified tube screamer, a rat, some boss turbo overdrive, etc., all can do some pretty interesting things when blended in and used tastefully. Lastly, I'd probably have to mention my Marshall JCM800, which while debatably not a piece of recording gear I suppose, has been used on a variety of recordings and has never let me down.

MEGAN: For live sound, DBX compressor, gates of any kind that have adjustable thresholds, and analogue boards. I've worked on a few digital ones, and enjoyed it, but I can't tell you how many times I've watched a talented engineer stare at a perfect sound wave on a screen, while the house sounds awful.

JACK: My pair of distressors are fucking rad. Can't beat em. The Chandler tg-1... holy shit. Also, the Shure sm7, very cool mic.

STEVE: Honestly, my favorite thing these days is my live room. I have been working for years in this tiny basement that is very dead-sounding (few reflections) and only has a 6' ceiling. My new room is easily six times the size, has 14' ceilings and is super live and loud—basically the complete opposite of my previous space. It is a little problematic at times if a band is really loud and their drummer isn't. But if the drummer is good, the room makes it sound that much better. I don't know that I have any particular attachment to any of my "nicer" gear. I think the more unique stuff, like all the PZM mics I have, I would have a very difficult time living without—just in terms of drum sounds, etc. I am lost without delays. They are so important to giving

recordings depth. I have a Lexicon PCM 60 reverb that I'm quite fond of. And I think my cheap crossover has helped make the bass sit just right in so many mixes. These are always the things I have missed when I've worked in other studios.

KATHY: I always use the Sytek MP4A mic preamp these days. It's not really about that make or model, but I didn't realize how much of a difference decent preamps made until I started using them. Also my loveable little RNC ("Really Nice Compressor"), which you know, everybody loves the RNC. They're inexpensive and do a lovely job.

Do you think it is necessary for a punk band to get a record mastered?

WILL: Necessary? No. A good idea? Sure! Personally I get all the recordings I play on mastered because it has become part of my process for getting the end result I desire. If you're releasing a CD, it's probably a good idea to get it mastered to make sure that the volume is "competitive" as they say, and so it sounds more consistent on various playback systems. For vinyl, it becomes less necessary in my opinion because there will still be a mastering engineer who cuts it to the vinyl and can adjust the volume and EQ as needed, if needed. However, if you get your final mix and feel that there's ways it could be improved upon that don't require a re-mix, it might very well be worth it.

MEGAN: My old punk band sent a press testing back to United to get remastered, and it definitely was better. Mastering is an art unto its own, considering all of the dynamics of different mediums. It is very crucial if you want a recording to sound good, specifically on vinyl or CD, that it get mastered for that medium.

JACK: These days it is kind of the style to have the recording loud and pushed, so if you want that, mastering is going to be necessary.

STEVE: I would say getting a vinyl record mastered anywhere but the pressing plant is always a good idea. The guys at the pressing plant are more concerned with making your record not skip than with the musical subtleties of it. And you pay for this process either way. Why not drop the extra \$50 or \$100 and have it done much better? I would like to add that mastering seems to have become this mysterious thing that so many people are willing to shell out big bucks for. Granted, you definitely get what you pay for in terms of mastering in most cases. However, I strongly believe that your money will go much further in a recording studio than a mastering studio. Mastering is important, but my mind is blown constantly by bands that spend as much if not more on mastering their records than they did recording it.

KATHY: It definitely makes a difference, but it seems like it's all a question of where your money's best spent, especially when you're a broke punk band.

What are some of your favorite recordings and why?

WILL: This is tough, and I'm not sure I can think of a definitive list by any means. Off the top of my head: *Twelve Hour Turn - The Victory Of Flight LP*. For one thing, this record has one of my favorite snare sounds. Besides that, everything is well defined and has its own space, but isn't really polished or too clean either. It's also my favorite material by them, so that helps too! Bonnie 'Prince' Billy - *Superwolf LP*. I really love the dynamics of this record. Overall, it is very full and open. The guitar tone at times has a borderline magical sparkle and chime to it that I think is essentially perfection. *Hail of Rage - Fucking Pissed 7"* - perhaps a strange, or at least obscure, mention, but in my opinion this is one of the most brutal recordings and records ever. The drums are probably actually too loud in the mix, but they are also the highlight of the band in my opinion as they are possibly the most intense drum performance on a punk/hardcore/grind record, so it works. (Side note: The recent discography has additional guitars added and is re-mastered with the song order changed, so I would urge people to track down the actual 7" if interested.) *Joan of Arc - The Gap LP*. Somehow this album pulls off being extremely over-edited to a point of ridiculousness, yet still feels organic to me. In general, I'm not a fan of recording tricks that sound like they could never happen in real life, but I don't know, somehow it works really well in this context. This album is pretty much genius in my book. Honorable mentions go to *The Exploding Hearts*, *The Clash*, *Kajun S.S.*, *Union of Uranus* (sort of the opposite of *Hail of Rage* with ridiculously loud guitars forming a soaring wall of sound), and on and on.

MEGAN: My most recent favorite is Sleater Kinney's last album, because the sound is so warm, big and sharp around the edges. In fact, it's interesting how that band got a different amazing engineer for every record they did, allowing each album to have its own distinctive personality. With *The Woods*, they really tapped into the big 70s sound like early Pink Floyd, Roky Erickson and The Aliens and Mudhoney dirty grunge, with heavy textures that showcase a creative engineer. I've also got this amazing *Everything You've Ever Wanted To Hear On the Moog* record. Definitely the product of crazy wingnut sound geeks.

JACK: Shit. How am I supposed to fit all this in? Ok...

1. *Refused - The Shape of Punk to Come*. This record makes me want to quit because it sounds so fucking good. Just in good taste.

2. *Converge - Jane Doe*. Converge is good, Kurt is good, and that record is pissed! Love it.

3. *Rocky Votolato - Suicide Medicine*. Honest, organic, true. Fuck yeah.

4. *Meneguar - I was Born at Night*. Sounds exactly like the band live, and that is a beautiful thing.

Wait. I could list a hundred more, but I'm not listing my favorite recordings, I'm listing my favorite albums. It really doesn't matter what the recording sounds like. The music has to be good.

STEVE: 1. *High on Fire - Black Blessed Wings*. The guitars sound fucking tremendous and are so insanely loud and yet the drums are still so present and sound huge themselves. I just feel that this record is very well balanced and I use it as a reference when I'm mixing almost always. I know a lot of people are down on this record but I think the production makes it my favorite of theirs.

2. *Drive Like Jehu - Yank Crime*. The mix is just perfect. The drums are not overcompressed like most/all major label recordings. I really like Mark Trombino's work, even though he does such overcompressed bubble-gum poppy crap sometimes. I truly appreciate how the noisy guitar work translates so clearly.

3. *Helmet - In the Meantime*. And I only mean that song. For some reason, that song only was recorded by Albini. The entire rest of the album was recorded by Wharton Tiers. It is pretty astounding how close Andy Wallace got the recordings to sound. But that one song just sounds so much more heavy and punishing. The drums are a bit tighter than I'd like and the vocals are terribly loud. But the overall mix is great and the guitars seriously sound perfect. If I ever get a guitar to sound like that on a record, I can die happy.

Other stuff I've been digging lately: *Call Me Lightning - Soft Skeletons* and *Neurosis - Given to the Rising*.

KATHY: Just recently I've been listening to Mirah, and Jessica Rylan and Prince. So a pretty broad span, recording style-wise. And again, I don't really care about the recording per se, but just whether I like the music. Although come to think of it, at least with Mirah and Prince, their recording process probably shapes their musical process a lot.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION...

This interview was originally around 11,000 words long. This is the condensed version. To read the full unedited interview visit us at givemeback.org or send a self addressed stamped envelope with your request to Give Me Back PO Box 73691 Washington, DC 20056 USA.

If you like political hardcore and live in New Jersey, then you really don't have many options for local bands. Speaking up for what you believe is often strangely isolating. Seasick deals with their fair share of obstacles and still pulls off some of the freshest and inspiring brands of hardcore/punk that New Jersey has seen in some time. They've recently released a ten inch entitled "Awakenings" and completed a full U.S. tour. I whipped up a batch of vegan macaroni and cheese and sat down with Mark, Nick and Matt to talk about the band, touring, and the current state of politics in the United States. Interview by Tom Schlatter

SEASICK

Seasick strikes me as a band that may be too "punk" for the hardcore kids and too "PC" for the punk/thrash scene. Although there are some bands that are similar to you (I Object, Regulations, etc), do you feel that you have a hard time finding a scene that feels like home or finding bands/people that are on the same page as you?

Nick: Absolutely

Marc: Yeah, I think the entire time we've been a band that's what our existence has been struggling with. Obviously no one likes the term "PC" because it was coined by right-wing reactionaries to marginalize people who don't want to be assholes...but, obviously, like many people in punk rock we've been labeled as that in the past. But we've still made friends with a lot of different bands. You just have to find bands and people you can get along with while at the same time maintaining your own integrity.

Three of you live together and do shows at your house. Letting people in your house to share it with the outside is sometimes a risk. Do you feel this has been a risk for you? Has this changed your view of punk as a community?

Matt: We haven't had any problems with the shows. Everyone that comes has been really respectful. There were incidents at 120 where Nick's room got robbed though.

Marc: There are just normal things that any show house has to deal with. Like if you book a show on a night where roommates are like, "I didn't know there was a show tonight." Sometimes that can be a problem. Or when you let someone do a show at your house and they decide not to clean up afterwards. But there haven't really been any huge problems here so far thankfully.

Nick: Lately it's been pretty rad. We've become friends with all the other bands in New

Brunswick. We go to their house shows, they come to ours.

Marc: It's cool because all the bands in New Brunswick live at show houses so we've got a little so-called "community." Screaming Females, Zhenia Golov, Killin' It [all do] shows at their houses.

Nick: People react strangely to the fact that all the New Brunswick houses have named their houses to cover up their address, just in efforts to get less exposure so there's less likelihood that the cops will show up. That's been interpreted by people outside of New Brunswick as some attempt to alienate or isolate ourselves

just racist and donates a lot of money to white power organizations. So putting these two together makes the most evil corporation of all time. So we were talking about that and someone at the bar was like, "Fuck you man, I fucking love this Miller shit, son!"

Nick: Yeah, when we talk about the songs the kids that are already into politics or philosophy or whatever are into it. The kids who aren't, just aren't. We've made some friends through it and I'm sure we've made some enemies. We're gonna keep talking about our songs because we feel that it's important.

"Complacency forsakes history of struggle,



from the hardcore scene, which is the last thing we want to do. Aside from the cops, I don't really know who we'd be keeping out.

Mark: I also think it's kinda cool, people have to talk to other people to get the address. They actually have to have contact with other people. I can't prove this in any way, I have no "scientific" data, but I think it could be a positive thing in that aspect.

You're one of very few bands in New Jersey that talks about their songs at shows. There are others, yes, but not many. How has the reaction been to your between song dialogue?

Matt: From what I gathered Nick's speeches are usually pretty short and sweet. Afterwards we usually go right into a song, so I don't know if people dig it, they don't have time to clap.

Mark: (laughs) Yeah, make a point, then follow it up with a fast part, then a mosh part and people are usually like, "Did they say something?" I think at Asbury Lanes someone yelled, "Shut the fuck up!" from the bar. We were talking about how the Miller Corporation, which was already staunchly anti-union, was trying to drop their union contract by refusing to negotiate with them in good faith. Which is bullshit. The union called a boycott. Miller bonded with the Coors Corporation, which is pretty much straight up white power. The owner of Coors is

I'm proud to call myself a feminist." I took this line from your song entitled "Horizon." It's my hope that the people that come to see your band think about these lyrics rather than just sing along as the ritualistic hardcore activity. Do you feel lyrics like these are provoking thought among a scene (at least in New Jersey) that is otherwise apathetic and uncaring?

Nick: There's always the likelihood, however small that might be, that someone might read the lyrics and think about them a bit. Which, has in fact happened. One kid came up to me and said, "I was vegetarian, but now I'm seriously considering becoming vegan." That was really cool.

Mark: I kind of feel that with a lot of our lyrics, our friends and a good amount of people already agree with a lot of the things that are said. But I still feel that a lot of things, especially given the climate of hardcore in New Jersey punk rock, that these things still need to be said. Just as the song says, "There's still work to be done". Whether or not people are aware of that, doesn't depend on whether a band is saying it. It's just that this is what we feel should be said and how we feel about the world...so why wouldn't we say how we feel?

Matt: What else would we write about? Nick, what else would you write about?

Nick: I don't know....

Mark: Biodome!

Matt: Yeah, we'd write about Pauly Shore movies.

Nick: When we play we sing about these topics and in the Northeast, yes, a lot of people may already subscribe to veganism, feminism, etc. ...But when we play down south or go to rural areas kids still say pretty fucked up shit. It doesn't seem like these kids are exposed to the ideas we sing about like atheism, veganism, etc. so I think there's some value in singing about these things.

Mark: Also, when we're on tour in the past we bring along the New Jersey info shop, which is a radical book distro. When we go, again, to the South, kids will be like, "Wow, I never get to see these books anywhere." They tend to be very interested as if they're being exposed to new ideas. You haven't reached everyone, there's still things that need to be said, still ideas that need to be exchanged. If it was true that we didn't need to say these things then sexism wouldn't exist in hardcore...and clearly we all know it does, regardless of things I've read recently.

In terms of sound you guys have a pretty mixed bag going on. I'm hearing some d-beat, some 80's style punk, modern thrash and some heavy Bad Brains influence. Who writes the music? Did you set out for an eclectic mix or did it just happen that way?

Matt: I guess it kind of evolved over the course of our many, many line up changes. Mark's pretty much taken over most of the song writing because we all realized I can pretty much only write "Ramones" songs. Me and Mark wrote the 10" together, he did a lot of the songs alone, and they're a lot better than the ones I write. So we let him take over that aspect.

Mark: Matt's a better writer than he's saying right now. I guess one way I've been approaching song writing for Seasick is that we're all pretty much well aware that what we're doing musically in hardcore is sort of paying tribute to a lot of bands that came before us. Obviously Seasick wouldn't exist without Bad Brains or Minor Threat like most or all hardcore. You kind of have to find a cer-

tain level of what you find exciting about this music. I hate to sound pretentious but hardcore in a lot of ways is kind of like an art form. As shitty as that might sound, I don't mean it in a negative way. Within any art form, for example the blues, you have a lot of guys out there replicating BB king, just as you have jazz artists replicating Billy Holiday.

Matt: We also just write songs sometimes based on how much fun we have playing them. If a part is boring we just throw it out. It really comes down to what kind of songs we want to be playing at the time. We can write a whole song and play through a couple times at practice and just be like, "It's not working, it's just not fun."

Mark: Actually what we do is take out a top hat and we get slips of paper that say "thrash" and "mosh". We put the slips into a hat, shake it up and then we have this fast mosh song.

Matt: Every so often we get the golden ticket that says "Bad Brains Part" and we just pay homage to a Bad Brains breakdown.

Mark: Then I just put a solo over it and everybody will get mad.

The election is coming up next year, some punks don't partake in voting or the political process. What is your stance on punks who favor voting the Republican Party out? Is it effective?

Nick: It's a difficult issue. In one sense by voting you're basically registering your consent with the system as a whole, regardless of whatever party you're voting for. The system as it exists today is something that we all don't really get behind. So there is that aspect of why we wouldn't want to vote. But at the same time it's kind of hard to deny that the Democrats aren't just as bad as the Republicans. I mean, they're slightly better but it's just not much.

Mark: I'm not inherently against things that would cause utilitarian approach to mainstream politics in a sense. A lot of people do want access to healthcare, or a guaranteed right to abortion. But I strongly doubt any Democrat favors that, even if they say that. For instance, "Is Barack Obama wearing a pin?"...I mean, is that really an issue? Would I give my consent to any form of party that advocates capitalism or authoritarian ends? No. I openly identify as anarchist. There are things that people need; I don't think the Democrats will provide it. The Republican Party is clearly disturbing and disgusting. I particularly hate Giuliani. I think he's making the Italian American people identify with values that they haven't traditionally identified with. There's just as much money invested in [the Democrats] as the Republicans, but "maybe we'll give you better healthcare, or throw the unions a bone." I read this book which was very disturbing called, *The Unions and the Democrats: an Enduring Alliance*. It pretty much said that unions and Democrats work well together because unions are pretty much a lobbying group and they lobby for workers rights through the Democratic Party. I guess because they have such large numbers, so they figure

people like John Corzine are going to want to cater to certain labor rights. I don't think that's a literal form of democracy. I would advocate a more direct form of democracy. To sum all this up, no I'm not fucking voting.

Matt: I'm not even registered! (Laughs)

Nick: I think one can even argue that the Democrats are almost worse because at least the Republicans are honest about how shitty they are. The Democrats are out to deceive people with these false promises. (Laughs) I don't know, I guess vote Republican and let things get as terrible as they can possibly get, maybe then some people will want to see some change.

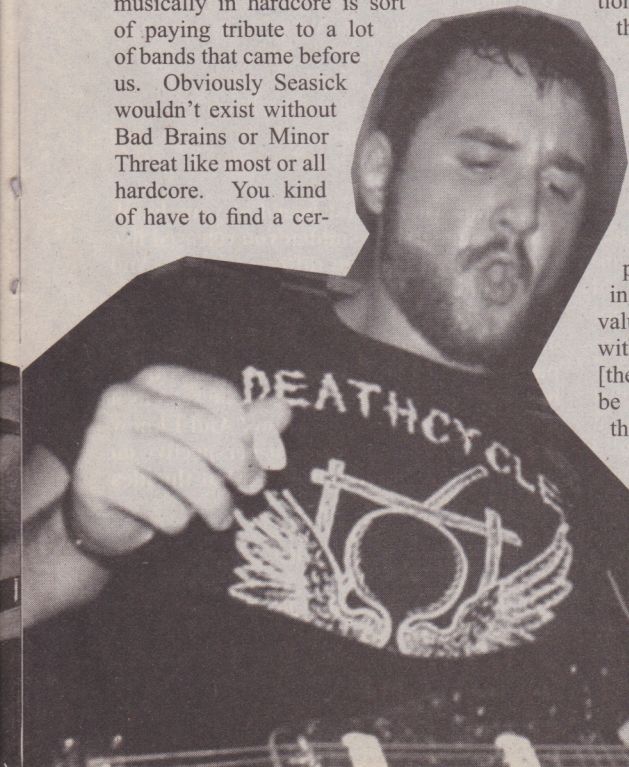
I conflict with some of the primitivist view, but also conflict with the non voting view, because if you take an issue like Planned Parenthood, for instance, which is under attack right now. The government could very well cut all Planned Parenthood. This is something that's happening right now that's going to affect the lives of so many people. One of the bigger ways to stop that from happening is to have someone in office who may favor Planned Parenthood. I know it sucks that most candidates don't fulfill their promises, but part of me believes maybe this one small aspect of change could happen by voting someone else in.

Mark: With things like Planned Parenthood I feel that voting can be looked at as something that is done in 20 minutes one day; one practice. There are a lot of other things people can do for Planned Parenthood, like volunteer or learn clinic defense, so voting is just one small way. I think that's a lot more powerful than just walking into a booth and pulling a lever and hoping that some rich person is gonna agree with this one aspect.

Nick: Just to expand on that: I think a lot of punk's oppositions to voting is that voting is sold to us as, "Your duty to other people." Basically like, "If you register to vote then that's enough." But by not voting you're throwing your hands up in the air and saying, "That's not enough, there's a lot more things we could do." If you supplement [voting] with direct action or civic participation then yeah, maybe that's good.

Mark: There is also a lot that can be said about just talking to people and interacting with your families and communities about what you feel is important. Whereas a lot of people are apathetic, I feel people maybe have politics sold to them in a very commodified way (to use a Marxist term) and that's very disenchanting. I think that's why people think things don't affect them. If you're open with people and start a dialogue that can be important. I don't tell people what to do or how to live. I explain to people how I feel and communication happens.

Sometimes positive things can happen with that.



NO AGE

I've heard LA's No Age described as noise-pop, but when I finally saw this two-piece live they were just fucking fun and punk. They had a spark that was contagious and the audience came alive. The next morning we met up with them at the local vegan bakery to sit outside, eat snacks and ask them a few questions.

Interview by Fil and Katy Otto

F: Can you describe No Age, or what it is? What is No Age?

Dean: Randy...

Randy: No Age is a state of mind. I think that really means embracing the impossibilities in life sometimes as well as emphasizing the good and the bad. Meaning that it's okay—bad isn't always bad. So, No Age is embracing the idea of your physical limitations. Sometimes you get hurt. We had a record called *Get Hurt* and it essentially meant that although stuff is painful, it can sometimes be really...

D: ...powerful.

R: Powerful. It's a good opportunity to grow.

D: Yeah, and I think No Age is an outlet for me and Randy to do a lot of different creative things. It's kind of like a vehicle so that we could like play with, mess around with, and do all sorts of shit with.

F: And how do you all feel like you fit into the punk scene?

D: Well, we're punk... we're punks (laughs).

R: I feel like we want to play venues that aren't necessarily like, bars, so I think that taking advantage of all-ages, underground venues seems pretty punk to me. We are both involved in this club in LA—or this venue in LA—called The Smell that's all-ages and books really extreme avant-garde noise-punk bands. I do sound there when I can—when I'm not on tour—and Dean books shows and we both work the door and sometimes make food, so...

D: I also... sometimes I also enjoy playing challenging places too, like... I don't know, maybe bars sometimes...

R: Yeah.

D: Like we played at the Bowery Ballroom in New York which is, I don't know what the capacity is, I'm gonna say a thousand. And that was fun, I mean, I feel like we took the vibe of last night's show and brought it there and that was really hard to do, but I think we pulled it off. But doing things like that is super-fun, too. But I wonder, yeah I don't know. Punk, the idea of punk, is such an interesting thing because I feel very connected to punk rock and the way I live my life and stuff. But I feel like when people maybe first meet me, they might be surprised by how I live.

R: Like when I was a teacher, I would tell other teachers or even a kid like "Oh I'm in a band" and they're like "What kind of music is it?" and I'm like "punk."

D: And they're like "What?! You're not a punk!"

R: Yeah! And they look at me like "But mister... you can't... what do you mean?" I'm like, "No, I think it's punk." ...in that kind of Minutemen sense of like punk... or that punk is whatever we say it is.

D: Yeah

R: I've never worn a bondage belt, but... (laughs)

F: ...but you have aspirations...

D: I definitely wore a bondage belt for at least two days in high school. I think I borrowed it from a friend. Then I sat down and ripped something and I was done. I was done with it. I ripped like a couch or something (laughs).

K: How do you engage... or do you ever want to engage audiences that give off the appearance of not wanting to be engaged?

R: Well, here's what I've learned. There's a couple of approaches you could take to it. You perceive that the audience doesn't care and at some point you're offended. You're like "Wow man, I'm up here singing my heart out, giving you everything I've got." What I've understood is that it's like anything in life: people's reactions to things are their choice and those choices belong to them. I can't make choices for people. Other people's opinions and choices belong to them and in response I can only react and make choices that belong to me. So I can choose to either get upset and say "Hey! Wake up people, we're doing this!" or...

D: But fuck that! (laughs) Well we've learned that because when we were in Wives I remember, there was that approach where at first I'd be antagonizing and be like "Let's fuckin' go! come on, yeah!" and people don't...

R: Yeah, like, kick over chairs...

D: People don't like that and I don't like that because I feel like an asshole. And people at the end of the day are kind of like "Well, you're forcing me." And, "Well, I like your band, but... I'm nervous. There's people behind me. I don't want to move," which is fine.

R: ...or "I don't feel like dancing."

D: Yeah, which is totally fine. So I think, instead of antagonizing people, maybe get up on top of an amp and fucking jump off of it.

R: Yeah, you just lead by example. It's like,

well okay so here's what I'm gonna do: I'm gonna dance around and have a great time and if you guys feel like dancing around and having a great time then feel free to do so, because that's what I'm doing and hopefully we're in a safe comfortable place where everyone feels like they can do that.

D: And it's fine. Because if not, I'm okay with looking stupid, dancing around, if nobody else does. It's okay. I've been doing that shit my whole life, in high school and stuff like "I'mmm stupid!" and everyone's like, "You are." And I'm like, "Alright... that's cool."

R: But then you find the couple of kids who kind of get it or they see that you're goofy and they say "Well, I'm kind of goofy too." and then it kind of spreads like a little molecular reaction. Then you get all the goofy kids doing this little dance in the front and then it works and it's fun. Otherwise, you know, they paid to come to the show, they made the effort to come to the show and if they're not digging it then... then it's maybe not their show to go to.

D: In Wives... I don't do this anymore, but I used to do this schpeal about high school. I'd be like "You know, we're not in high school! There's no one who's gonna make fun of you in the back of the room. It's okay," and usually people would start to be like "You're right!" and start moving around. And that's still a good approach but I just don't need to say that anymore.

K: But what if they ARE in high school?

D: Yeah, true. Then it's like "We're not at *your* high school right now. We're at a safe space where you can just party."

R: ...express yourself...

D: And don't be afraid to look like a dumbass. It's okay. No one's gonna make fun of you, and if they do, fuck them, it doesn't matter.

F: I think when I first heard of your band, it was when all of a sudden you released five records all at once on different labels. And it reminded me of the sort of model that it seemed like Fucked Up used where they put out all these limited EPs and let other people put them out and then later compiled them into one CD. I think that could be seen as a marketing strategy, you know? And I know that you all have a different perspective on that, so I was just wondering what the idea behind that was.

R: I didn't know they did that.

D: Yeah, I didn't either.

R: I think we really did want to be part of everyone's smaller scene. Because I think the kind of people we asked to put them out... we

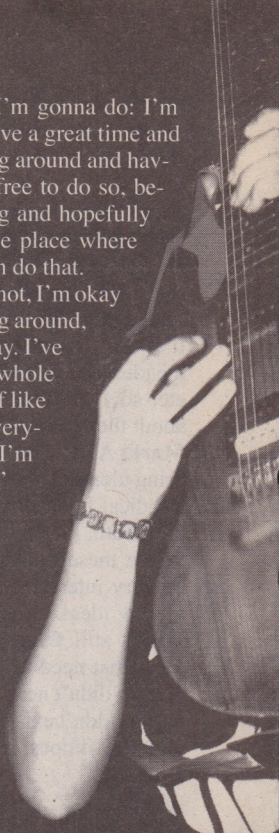


photo by Call Devitt

were hoping that the people that liked their labels would like us, you know. To come across a record in a 7" bin means you're really looking for music and you're wanting to find something new and take a chance. So I think by doing that we were hoping to find those... or that those kids would find us. The ones that are curious, digging through 7" bins.

D: Yeah, like one of the labels was in Sweden, and we pretty much knew that you probably wouldn't get it in the US, but it would be in Sweden. And one was in England and, they had distribution here, but you can't really get it, so... It's sort of like...

R: And just being on vinyl—it wasn't just for the passerby and the mildly interested—it was like, you probably want it and you'll probably want to like actively pursue it a little bit.

D: I think the other two reasons were also because like, I think in my mind when you start a band, you don't necessarily... you're still getting like all the ideas across, and I didn't really want to make a first record with just the first ideas we had because I knew we were going to be so much more. But the first things we kinda had to get out. And on the EPs there's like 20 songs or something. So we got that out and then it's like "Okay, now what are we really doing?" because that was just kind of reactionary to our old band or reactionary to what we're going through and stuff so... There was that, and also it was just that we thought it was really funny.

R: It was kind of a challenge.

D: Yeah we were like "Dude, how funny would it be to put out five of them out at the same time? It'd be fuckin' funny if we could pull it off. That'd be rad." And then people were like "Yeah! We can do it." Then we were just like "Whoa, that's fucked up." (laughs)

R: Yeah, we find ways to sort of challenge ourselves. Like, "Can we pull this off?" And it's that same thing—like curating an art show—it's like, "Well, I actually want to learn how to do this." and the only way I've learned anything is just by doing it. I mean it sounds kind of weird but it's like I went to school and I learned a lot of stuff, but the things I really learn are the things I'm participating in and making mistakes and doing. Like being in bands or playing guitar, I make mistakes all the time. So then I have to learn how to not make the mistake. Putting out records is the same kind of thing. Like one of the records we thought was never going to come out. The guy stopped writing us back. And I think for a lot of kids and punk bands it's a challenge, you know. You take a chance and record all of your ideas and you give it to one label and then it never comes out, or it comes out not quite the way you wanted it. So part of the idea was: well, if you do it five different ways chances are one of them is gonna...

D: Maybe four out of five...

R: Yeah exactly, four out of five would come out, or one out of five. You never know who's really gonna take the chance or really follow

through. We were very fortunate and very lucky that all five came out and that they were pleasantly accepted by a lot of people. We had the opportunity to compile them later, but you just never know in the beginning. So, we were really just trying to challenge ourselves.

D: Totally.

K: I did have one more question.

D+R: Yeah!

K: I think that you're both pretty lucky to have one another with that kind of an intense of a creative partnership. I think that it's something that a lot of people hunger for and don't find, or find in unsatisfying and half-assed ways. But, doing something so intensely with one other person and spending that degree of time together, I can imagine is also somewhat strenuous on a friendship and on a relationship. So, what are some techniques that you have to preserve your friendship and artistic relationship?

D: We talk.

R: Communication.

D: So, as soon as we're upset at something another person does we just talk about it.

R: Yeah, it's communication. And that's good for any relationship, like you said. The instant something happens or there's a feeling of uncomfortableness or frustration, just say it.

D: You bring it up.

R: And if you know the other person is gonna do that, you're just kind of like "Look, if there's a problem tell me. I'm perceiving that what you're doing is like this." and if it is, you can trust the person will say it like "Yeah, I'm kind of pissed." And you're like "Well, I'm kind of pissed" and we talk. We talk about a lot of things and I would encourage anybody in any relationship just to communicate. And if you can't communicate, then it's not a very trusting relationship and maybe that's not the relationship you should be in.

D: We've definitely been with other bands who don't talk about things...

R: You get mind games. You get weird all kinds of shit.

D: We're just like "Hey, you did this shit, man. What the fuck? ...OK, let's talk about this for twenty minutes and I'm gonna sulk for another couple of hours, but we're cool."

R: Yeah, and you allow each other to be mad. You're gonna be mad and I'm gonna be mad. And I think you just, you get down to your motivations too, it's like "What are we really trying to get at here?," you know, cut through the bullshit, what's really going on here. It's a technique that has taken time to develop and learn. But yeah, working together just like everybody else, we fight.

K: I know it might seem like a strange question, but I do feel like people... relationship skills aren't really something that people...

R: Yeah, oh god.

D: No, totally! This has kind of gone over to my relationships with other people. We've learned a lot just being in bands together.

R: Yeah, like I said before, I went to college, but I've learned so much more just being in a band... real life skills that I apply everyday. And I've achieved dreams that were only dreams, through being in a band. So, I recommend to any kid out there, to any adult, that if you have a dream, just believe in yourself and try it and chances are, you'll find a community, if you don't already have one, to support you. You know, there's a lot of really cool communities out there. There's a lot of ways to find other like-minded, freaky folks like you. I didn't know where it was for years and years and then I just started doing it and then they came. They were suddenly there. I looked around like "Wait a second! There are cool people!" I didn't know... it's something you don't notice until you take your head out...

D: "I can be a trapeze artist and there's a bunch of other trapeze artists around! And they rule and they're wearing tights!"



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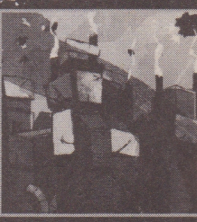
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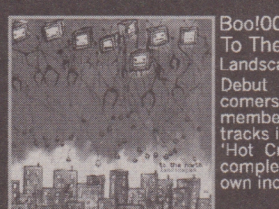
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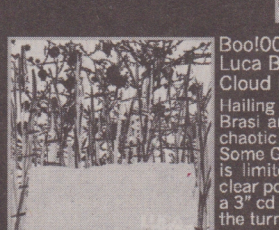
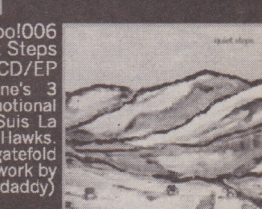
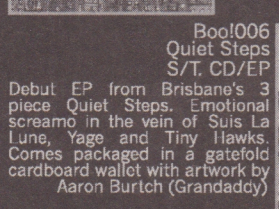


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Boo!005
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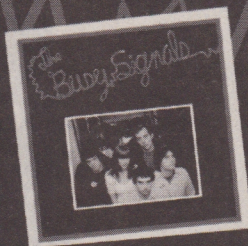
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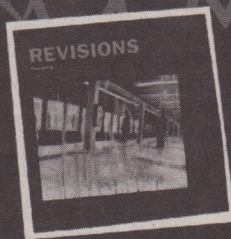
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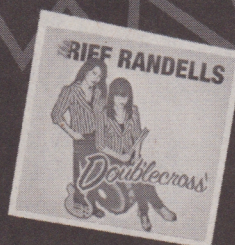
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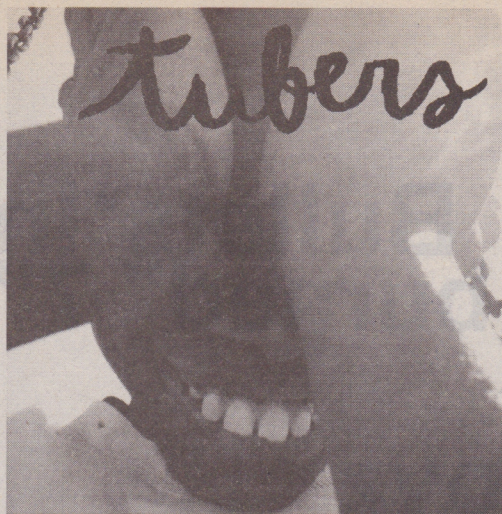
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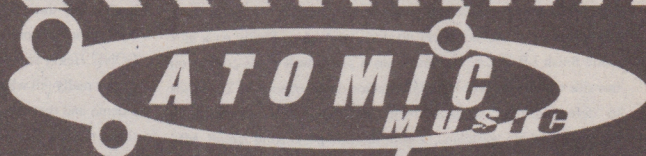


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ACTS OF SEDITION • Crown Victoria 7"

This is pretty much a flawless hardcore punk 7". For just six songs on 45, it feels as dense as most LP's. No filler whatsoever. Imagine if the singer of COALESCENCE had been in a punk band—a fast-as-shit heavy punk band like DEATHREAT, but with broader influences, occasional gang vocals, and a cow bell. I'm amazed at how tight this band is. Wrap it all up in a stunning watercolor painting of a smoldering cop car and I'm sold. FIL (Bloodtown Records • bloodtownrecords@yahoo.com)

AEROSOLS • 2nd 7"

Loud, destructive, urgent and pissed-off hardcore punk. Everything I said about the first 7" still applies. It still reminds me of a combination of the good parts of DAS OATH, LOOK BACK AND LAUGH, COMBAT WOUNDED VETERAN, and MUKILTEO FAIRIES. They tear through five songs and a cover in just a few minutes and it all blends together in a mess of warm distortion. Short and sweet. Great songs, great recording, and a great package, but at what price and for how long? If I'm gonna pay \$9 for a gatefold 7" it could at least have a spine! FIL (Youth Attack • ihateyouthattack.com)

A FISTFUL OF DYNAMITE • Buck Wild CD

This is another in the league of bands trying to do the early AGAINST ME! thing. It's acoustic guitar, bass, and drums; folk punk with gruff vocals and singalongs. If you're into O PIONEERS! or THE RIOT BEFORE, it's worth checking out. Personally I felt like these guys were stretching. The lyrics are attempting political sincerity, so I'll give them props for that, but they revolve around clichés and come across pretty naive. It feels presumptuous to listen to a punk kid singing about being a soldier or a suicide bomber or how he wishes he could switch places with the homeless man on his street. Clearly this kid can't relate to those experiences. Still, the intentions are all in the right places here, so hopefully this band will evolve as they continue. GT (Raise Your Fist Records • 571 St. John Rd • Afton, NY 13730 • raiseyourfistrecords.com)

AGHAST • Deformities LP

This is some heavily distorted noisy d-beat style punk from Washington, DC. Similar to bands like DISCLOSE and CONFUSE. Eleven tracks of crushing, fast, blown out distorted guitars sail along with screechy distorted vocals. This record was recorded at Minimum Wage Studios. Nice old school cover art done by Andrew Scully on a nice matte finish LP jacket. The insert has a pretty well made collage on one side with all the lyrics and information on the other side. The lyrics to "deformed frogs" are pretty incredible: "ecosystem contamination, industrial fucking wasteland, a grim indication". A solid record. MM (agipunk.com • agipunk@fastwebnet.it)

AGNOSTIC FRONT • For My Family 7"

Ugh. Where do I start? The cover of this record is an Iron Cross in American flag tones. The first song is a straight lyrical rip-off of "New York Crew" by JUDGE (I mean, come on!). Roger also screams "STIGMAAAAAA!" before the solo even though everyone knows that Vinnie Stigma hasn't plugged his guitar into an actual amp at an AGNOSTIC FRONT show since 1985. This is trite, boring hardcore that is trying to sound like bands that are trying to sound like AGNOSTIC FRONT did in the 80's. I don't even know if that made sense, but neither does this record. LAL (Bridge 9 Records • 119 R Foster Street • Bldg 4 Ste 3 • Peabody, MA 01960 • Bridge9.com)

ALTARS • 7"

This sounds like the audio from a home video of a hardcore show in a gymnasium. A nearly indecipherable wall of noise, but it's kind of

intriguing to think that there's a band under there somewhere. It gets the full Youth Attack treatment with a small pressing, labor-intensive/cryptic packaging, and a hefty price tag. In other words: Nerds Only. FIL (Youth Attack • ihateyouthattack.com)

AMBITIONS • Exile 7"

At it's best this reminds me of the mid-nineties Revelation or Equal Vision catalogs. I can hear bits of IGNITE, SENSEFIELD, INTO ANOTHER, and GRADE as well as some hardcore backups in parts. At it's worst it sounds like the kind of eyeliner-emo-core that would grace the cover of AP or Spin magazine. The fact that three out of four of these songs are on their upcoming LP with a nearly identical cover, makes this less of a 7" than a marketing strategy. FIL (Bridge Nine Records • 119 Foster Street Building 4 Suite 3 • Peabody, MA 01960 • bridge9.com)

AMPERE/DAITRO • split 7"

I'm usually annoyed and confused by the idea of picture discs, but this record is one of the few exceptions by finding a subtle and tasteful way to use the medium. Just the fact that it's mostly black gives it the illusion of being just like any other record except that the drawings are not confined to the labels. The artwork by Nate Powell is able to sprawl across the grooves. Two frantic songs from AMPERE and one epic from DAITRO that has moments that remind me of YAGE. This is a solid release and both bands' lyrics are printed in French and English. FIL (Clean Plate Records • PO Box 9461 • North Amherst, MA 01059)

AMPERE/FUNERAL DINER • split 9"

I don't have to sell you on these bands, this record is blatantly all about the packaging. It's a one-sides split 9" that not only has an etching on side B, but also in between the two songs on side A, telling you exactly which grooves belong to which band. Sometimes this nerdy stuff can be annoying, but this one is really nice and features shockingly tranquil art by Mark McCoy. FIL (Clean Plate Records • PO Box 9461 • North Amherst, MA 01059)

ANCHORS • 2006 Demo CD

Another rad band coming out of DC. I like this band a lot. I have seen them a few times, and they basically rule. Well-written and played crusty fast hardcore with melody, taking big cues from HIS HERO IS GONE. Heavy shit. This demo though, does not represent them. You cannot really tell what is going on, which is a bummer. It happens; it is a demo and they are punk. However, I heard they just recorded some shit at the Jam Room that is fucking AWESOME. I'm stoked to get my hands on that. CH (self released, dropoutoflife@yahoo.com)

ANDREW JACKSON JIHAD/GHOST MICE • CD

I can't say that this record isn't predictable. AJJ and GHOST MICE are probably two of the most popular acoustic folk punk bands around right now, so it makes sense that they teamed up. Neither venture into much new territory, but they both offer 7 solid originals and a cover of each other's songs. ANDREW JACKSON JIHAD is an acoustic guitar and upright bass duo from Phoenix, AZ and they owe quite a bit of their sound to THE MOUNTAIN GOATS and the VIOLENT FEMMES. Their strong points are their clever song writing and wry sarcastic lyrics, though their theatrical vocal stylings can be a bit grating. It's hard to really say what kind of message ANDREW JACKSON JIHAD is getting at, because anytime the lyrics take a serious tone, they quickly turn towards sarcasm and discredit themselves. GHOST MICE on the other hand are as transparent as can be once they chime in with their optimistic extremism. GHOST MICE is an acoustic gui-

tar and violin duo from Bloomington, IN who also owe a lot of their sound to THE MOUNTAIN GOATS, but have been paving the road of acoustic punk for years with their extremely personal and honest lyrics. The songs on this split are mostly allegorical, depicting fantasy style battles against the evils of the world. They are warm and kid friendly acoustic anthems about fighting the system (and sometimes just a good D&D battle). GT (\$5pp Plan-It-X • PO Box 14001 • Gainesville FL 32604 • plan-it-x.com)

ANTHEM RED • Dancing on the Dishwasher CD

This is pop music with a punk influence. It's soooo clean. Like if the characters of Saved By The Bell started a punk band. The kind of "punk" that is referred to in the phrase "ska-punk." Sometimes the vocals remind me of RACHEL JACOBS, but with less bite. This is the band that your high school would let play during lunch in the cafeteria. Destined for college radio stardom. FIL (The Company with the Golden Arm • tcwta.org)

ANTILLECTUAL • Waves 7"

To me, this is pretty much the embodiment of what a good punk record should be. Everything, from the visual presentation, to the music, to the thoughts and intentions behind it is just so goddamn spot on, it's awesome. The one-sheet this came with namedrops STRIKE ANYWHERE and PROPAGANDHI, and for once I can actually see that it's an accurate frame of reference, rather than some dipshit PR guy pandering to try and move some units. At 6 songs, Waves is the record that either one of those bands could've put out in their earlier years if their songs were short enough. The songs are smart and topical, embracing DIY culture and lambasting sexism, brand marketing, etc. They just flat-out rip, aesthetically and musically. The shit's on colored vinyl and comes with a poster and sticker. The guy who runs the label included how-to information regarding getting your own records pressed. The band includes detailed, intelligent song explanations. The label did include a one-sheet (which is normally the death kiss for me) but it's actually just more of a story of his history with the band (he's from Pennsylvania, they're from the Netherlands) and how the record came to be. Most importantly - while there are a few moments when one of the vocalists encroaches just a bit too much into the land of BOY SETS FIRE-styled crooning - the record sits firmly between LESS TALK, MORE ROCK and CHANGE IS A SOUND, if either of the aforementioned bands were interested in writing consistently good ninety-second songs. This record rules from top to bottom, ladies and germs. KR (Square of Opposition Records • 2935 Fairview St. • Bethlehem, PA 18020)

ANTI-YOU • 7"

I have to admit that I'm a little biased towards this record. I think PUNKS BEFORE PROFITS is an awesome label, and I have faith that anything Ryan puts out is going to be great. This ANTI-YOU 7" is no exception. Blazing through 6 songs and a DISCHARGE on a one sided 7", this shit is fast and to the point. ANTI-YOU are from Roma, Italy and play an upbeat, undistorted style of hardcore that has been (re)gaining popularity in the past year. If you are a fan of the GRAVE MISTAKE catalog, this will not disappoint. And the screen printed b-side looks great! LAL (Punks Before Profits • PO Box 1148 • Grand Rapids, MI 49501 • punksbeforeprofits@hotmail.com)

¡APESHIT!/TIGERSHARK • split LP

I'm instantly reminded why I liked the ¡APESHIT! Demo. This ¡APESHIT! is pure panic. Trashy chaos with a lot of heart, that would not have seemed out of place playing a show in between HEROIN and IN/HUMANITY. On the flipside Richmond's TIGERSHARK bring on a mean stoner sludge like CATTLEPRESS or NOOTHGRUSH. It's

downtuned to the point where you feel it in your stomach. Recommended. FIL (Molsook Records • PO Box 14704 • Richmond, VA 23221)

ARMY OF FLYING ROBOTS • Life Is Cheap CD

This has Great American Steak Religion written all over it. Like URANUS or ONE EYED GOD PROPHECY. Like the screamier parts of ORCHID'S Chaos Is Me with more of a focus on being epic and metal. The lyrics are what really grabbed me. I haven't heard metal with political lyrics like these since the days of SUICIDE NATION and CREATION IS CRUCIFIXION. They have that slightly academic feel to them, written by someone with a passion for history. Slip this to metalheads as a gateway drug to critical thinking. Recommended. FIL (SuperFi Records • Flat 15 • The Jacobs Building • Burton Court • Bristol • BS8 1EE • UK)

AT HALF-MAST • Alive, Alone and Waiting CD

Five men playing modern heavy hardcore in the vein of RUINER and KILLING THE DREAM. Dude kind of sings like Pat from HAVE HEART. Lots of lyrics about "fighting," (not physical altercations) "brotherhood," "hearts," "yesterday," "mistakes," "tomorrow," "trust" and "bonds." Sometimes I think the songs are going to actually be about something but then they aren't. Fast parts, mosh, breakdowns and two cheesy solos. Heavy on the harmonized guitars at times. Production is decent, although the bass drum is far too clicky for my taste. Seemingly competent musicianship. Not bad, not great. One of many records to fall into the yaw of unremarkable mediocrity. Wouldn't be surprised if they were christians. CH (Goodwill/Words of War Records)

BABY GECKO/SOFT SHOULDER • split 7"

These two Arizona-based bands are a fantastic treat. SOFT SHOULDER offers three quirky tracks that include wild horned instruments, discordance, arty sounds, and frenzied vocals. The arrangements are exciting and engaging, with male/female vocals, driving rhythms, and interesting structures. The lyrics and vocal patterns got me hooked as well. BABY GECKO is kind of like garage rock with vocal effects that sound like being in a well or a stadium, if that makes sense. The songs were fun and I can imagine crowds in basements dancing or singing along. Lots of lyrical references to art. KO (Gilgongore Records • PO Box 7455 • Tempe, AZ 8528 • gilgongorerecords.com)

BATTLEFIELDS • Stained with the Blood of an Empire CD

Epic stoner metal. Four slick-sounding songs in thirty-three minutes and fifty-eight seconds. Yes, 33:58. And the first song starts with a five minute build up, replete with whispered screaming. Zzzzz... I envision colored floodlights while they play. These songs are comprised solely of space jam parts and stoner metal parts. These parts are often sharply divided, rendering a rather unsophisticated amalgamation. The tempo does not vary very much, keeping it slow. They ride some riffs real fuckin hard, lasting over two minutes. There is some math here and there, but overall, I do not find the music to be very captivating. I feel like if you are going to write eight and nine minute songs, you should be doing something fairly interesting with the music-you know, dynamics? Anyway, the main singer sounds like the dudes from CRADLE OF FILTH and Nightmares-era FROM ASHES RISE smashed together. His voice is pretty cool. Can't understand a word though. The other dude who only sings sometimes has a deep, typically "brutal" voice that I do not feel that much. I tried reading the lyrics, but the small, dark gray dotted font against a black background was not working out for me. This band probably has way too much equipment (again, keeping with the "brutal" theme) and takes fucking forever to set up. CH (Init Records • PO Box 871 • Sioux Falls, SD 57101-0871 • initrecords.com)

BEST FRIENDS FOREVER • Romance Conflict Adventure CD

Yes! BFF is a fast paced indie pop trio from MPLS, well known for their unabashed romantic fascination with a certain 19th century President who wore a stove pipe hat. They remind me of a more intricate and clever RONDELLES with dual high pitched female vocals. I've waited a long time for this second full length of theirs and I was not disappointed. The theme here is tour flings. Almost every song tells a scattered tale of long distance romantic misadventures with biting humor. This is their first album with a new drummer and I would guess that he grew up playing hip hop, because the beats on this joint are

bumpin'. The songs are also faster than their previous releases so you have to pay attention if you don't want to miss their on point lyrics. For good measure there's even a song on here about President Eisenhower. Definitely check this out. GT (\$5ppd Plan-It-X • P.O. Box 14001 • Gainesville, FL 32604 • plan-it-x.com)

BETTER NEVER • ...ever 7"

As far as I know, this is a local hardcore studio project that hasn't ever played a show. The selling point here is that it features guest vocals from John Brannon of NEGATIVE APPROACH and Shawn Brown of SWIZ. In fact, on the back cover, where I was hoping to find lyrics, there's just an extensive list of credits. I can kind of understand not wanting to print the lyrics though, with a sing-a-long like "People laugh, people cry, we were all born to die." But the last song sounds like it could be about getting older and giving up, which is an interesting topic to me. All of the guest vocals and the hardcore pass-the-mic game make it hard not to be reminded of PATH OF RESISTANCE, whom I might add, also released their first record before ever playing a show. Coincidence? FIL (2441 18th St. • Washington, DC 20009)

BIG WORM • Alaskan Thunderfuck CDR

Four short blasts of thrashy, creamy, sloppy powerviolence sandwiched in between two slices of stoned-to-the-bone. Five minutes of noise presented in a folded piece of paper with a computer printout of an upside-down cross on the front and a goat on the back. Next. FIL

BLACK SEPTEMBER • Tide of the Storm CD

It's no coincidence that black metal is always the spawn of the bitter cold, and although Chicago may not be home to the Carpathian forest, it is the windy city, and for me, is unbearably cold. So it comes as no surprise that BLACK SEPTEMBER have the familiar fangs of black metal plunged deep into their wicked hearts. They manage to tread the thin line between elegance and the macabre in all of their lyrical, musical, and visual aspects. (Take a pentagram bedazzled animal skull in a wreath of roses for example) Fans of LUDICRA or LIKE FLIES ON FLESH may get something out of this. MT (Thin_the_heard@hotmail.com • Blackseptemberchicago.com)

BLOOD ON WEDDING DRESS • Hey! Apple: 0506 Collection Tape

This is chaotic Malaysian grindcore with sweet samples, fun breakdowns and some spacey electronic interludes. They even throw some cool funk and jazz in there just so they can tear that shit up with brutally spastic blasts. A lot of high end here. I bet they are fucking insane live. This is a collection of two 7"s they did, on tape and nicely packaged. Not unlike DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN, but less tech, and more sass. GT (Utarid Tapes • utaridtapes@yahoo.com)

BLOODY PHOENIX • War, Hate and Misery CD

This is really a great sounding release. All of the fury from the guitars,

bass, and drums mesh perfectly with the wretched and merciless vocals. Structurally speaking, most of this record is charging along at a pretty swift pace with pulverizing and tight blasts at its nucleus. This Is grind played right. MT (To Live a Lie Records • 1306 Flint Pl • Raleigh, NC 27605)

BOBBY JOE EBOLA AND THE CHILDREN MACNUGGITS • Carmelita Sings... CD

From what I've heard about the Bay Area Geekfest scene that existed in the late 90's, the whole idea was about pushing the limits of what was considered punk and what wasn't. So I don't know why it came as such a surprise to me that this seminal Geekfest band is basically just a tongue in cheek folk rock band. This is a re-release of the bands epic final album, originally released in 2000. I've got to say that out of context, it's a little confusing. It's kind of like if a cynical sadistic WEIRD AL was ghost writing songs for an acoustic version of the ONION FLAVORED RINGS with three part harmonies. The shit is pretty funny but they certainly hit some low points when they venture into the territory of sophomoric sexual jokes. If I didn't have to listen to the whole thing to write this review, I probably would have turned it off once I hit "If you really love me, then put out tonight, put out tonight, put out tonight." If you're into any of the descendants of this band such as THE FLESHIES or NEVERENDING PARTY, then this is worth checking out if just for the history. Otherwise, read up on Geekfest and you might get enough context to see this as more than a weird twisted record. GT (Thrillhouse Records • PO Box 460207 • San Francisco, CA 94146 • thrillouserecords.com)

BOLLO • Foot [River Falls] Head CD

This is a dark, minimal record that operates in fairly narrow sonic territory and still manages to feel spontaneous and, at its best, visually evocative. BOLLO plays a restrained hybrid of clean, ENGINE DOWN-ish post-hardcore, 60s pop-jazz guitar (in the vein of, say, Lalo Schiffrin), and melodic rock with a touch of light synth drone. These aren't obviously comtable genres, but BOLLO blends them with a refreshing amount of ease and polish. I barely noticed the lack of vocals for the first few tracks, which I think reflects the high quality of the recording and the seamless exploration of diverse musical elements. The progression of the album is well conceived and each track provides a tight, vibrant interpretation of the fundamental melodies and moods that reoccur throughout. I wouldn't be surprised if some of BOLLO's stuff is improvised or has been honed from a lot of careful "jamming out. The only really valid criticism I can come up with is that the distorted guitar riffs that punctuate several of the songs are noticeably more generic than the refined interplay of harmonies in the cleaner passages. BOLLO isn't totally innovative, but they manage to twist a number of seemingly divergent ideas (eras?) into a challenging, technically outstanding record. BL (Altin Village • Louisenstrasse 53 • 01099 Dresden • Germany • altinvillage.de • Mine Records)



ACTION PATROL

(COVERING AN AVAIL SONG)

12/01/07

Photo By FIL



PARTYLINE

Photo By FIL

BOMBS AND BEATING HEARTS • From Dumpsters Rise CD

I like the queering of military force and the conceit that 'love is freedom' in the opening track of this album. And while the second track posits the funny (on purpose, I hope) "Choice between us and them" as a set up for "I choose the terrorists!" this album is a collection of pretty bland folk-punk with singing so flat it makes Shane MacGowan sound like Pavarotti. The cover of "Folsom Prison Blues" is a pale shadow of Johnny Cash. "Citation song", an instrumental, shows some more promise as a rousing sea shanty/air built around melodica, accordion, and tambourine. Sadly, this gives way to the sub-sub-sub-Dylan harmonica and guitar stomp of "Girl Named Jerk". There's a good energy here and I have a sense that these folks are trying to juxtapose some personal and political stuff that could be interesting, but in the end the music just doesn't hold up. I realize that I stopped describing the individual tracks about halfway through the album, but only the title of "Shiny Happy People Holding Bombs" and the sloppy-but-cool klezmer vibe of "Luftwaffe" elevate the second half of the record above the sore-throated, double-time, folk-punk monotony. HM (Salty Hobo • 6085 500 E #2 • Salt Lake City, UT 84102)

BREAD AND ROSES • Deep River Day CD

Folk 'n' country punk. The instrumental arrangements (traditional instruments) on this record are really solid, spiffy even. I also really like how they draw on a lot of different sources for their songs. In brief, a folksy "jab at the never-ending punx-norms psychological arms race" ("Making Punk a Threat Again"); John Milton ("Reply to Michael"); a shape-note songbook ("Babylon is Fallen"); Not being actual hoboes ("Never Hopped a Train") and so on. I also dig the sly references to punk classics in such an un-punk-rock punk record. "Never Hopped a Train" echoes the MEKONS' jab at THE CLASH ("Never Been in a Riot" took the piss out of "White Riot") and "Bedtime for Plutocracy" is presumably a reference to the DEAD KENNEDYS' "Bedtime for Democracy" (and probably the most compelling arrangement on the record). My only real complaint is in the vocals which hew to the Shane MacGowan template of hoarse, slightly toneless singing. I realize that everyone sings their own way but most of the time that sound grates on the ears, especially over such tuneful arrangements. In the second to last track, a female back up vocal hits the sound I've wanted to hear the whole time, but only for thirty seconds or so. HM (Fistolo Records • PO Box 2836 • Upper Darby, PA 19082)

BRIDGE AND TUNNEL • 7"

Seeing this New York City band live reminded me of JEJEUNE and other indie pop groups from my college years in the mid-nineties. Lilted guitars and anthemic group vocals make up the four tracks on this release, which serves as a perfect introduction to this band. There are parts that swell and meander, and it is clear to me that these are the

kinds of songs I would want to play on a road trip where I was trying to get away from something. Excellent drum production for a seven inch too - the kick cuts through really well. Highly recommended, especially for those that miss times past. Make sure to catch this band live. KO (No Idea Records • P.O. Box 14636 • Gainesville, FL 32604 • noidearecords.com)

BRIGHTER THAN A THOUSAND SUNS • CD

One 20-minute track, about a third of which is devoted to violin drone and crackling distortion. The bass, guitar, and drums kick in around the 7 1/2 minute mark. This strays from the metal-tinged hardcore I've heard on Self-Titled Demo so far. I'm not sure exactly how to describe it. There's a little math rock, a little aggressive groove (in the manner of GIRLS VS. BOYS), some stop/start that reminds me of a less noisy EARLY HUMANS (the drumming is pretty similar in parts). It's not bad even with little strains of midwest emo floating around in it. I'm not sure if each unit within the single track is meant to be part of a longer composition or meant to be songs but I'm leaning toward songs. I find it odd but charming that the band mate identified as "Guitar Master" ("Ecologist" and Psychiatrist" are the other two) plays drums and sings on this record. HM (Self-Titled Demo • stdemorecords.com)

BRI WHITE/JAMES FELLA • split 7"

Bri White's side of this single has a sort of dissonant, out-of-tune oom-pah-pah vibe with pleasantly out of tune acoustic guitar and what sounds like someone hitting piano strings using something other than the keys. Oh wait, there's something called a pianolin (which looks like a cross between an autoharp and a lap steel guitar) on this record. I recuse myself from trying to figure out what's what then. The vocals remind me of MIRAH and of Moe Tucker's all-too-infrequent singing in the VELVET UNDERGROUND. Radness. James Fella's side begins with lovely synth explorations which gives way to a deeply beautiful starkly chorded guitar and eerie vocals that are slowly drowned out by static. Fella and White are a couple and each writes liner notes about their experience of being in a relationship with an inspiring, creative person, which might seem overly personal. Somehow on this lovely split 7", it makes perfect sense. HM (Gilgongo Records • PO Box 7455 • Tempe, AZ 85281)

BROADWAY • Broadway The Demo CDR

I think you can put a fake moustache on just about anyone and they'll instantly look like party animals. This band is no exception. This is fun, sloppy, low-fi punk from the bay area that sounds like a drunk-ass house party in the best way. I picture people playing Edward Forty-Hands and dancing their asses off. Good and trashy. FIL (Broadway c/o Swamprat and Matt • PO Box 3265 • Berkeley, CA 94703)

CAP'N KOP\$ • Float Away to a Better Day... CDR

Four somewhat-depressing political folk songs with gravel-y vocals.

The first three translate loosely to "we're all fucked" and the fourth is a live recording of a song that reads like a simple class-analysis of the Titanic disaster. At the bottom there is the note "(Titanic?)" as if it was only meant for their fact checker. The music is fine-simple acoustic ditties-I just wish political songs were more inspiring, hopeful, or incendiary; these make me want to crawl back into bed. And what's up with the crude cover drawing of a figure in a hoodie hanging from a noose? I know the negative function on a photo copier usually makes things look cooler by reversing the colors, but... do you see where I'm going with this? Try again. FIL (\$3ppd Sharpie Fumes Collective • PO Box 31224 • Halifax, NS • B3K 5Y1 Canada)

CARL AND THE COMPOUND PLAYERS • Space Time Discontinuum 7"

Dude, just because you've got a 4-track and are on a high-fiving basis with your weed dealer doesn't mean you've got to put a record out. Christ, I thought JUD JUD was a novelty band. CATCP do seven songs here, spoofing punk, country and synth-rock with an atonal guy (Carl) blathering over the music. He's way up in the mix, so the music pretty much serves as a background for his jokes. And what jokes they are: the entirety of "Shuttlecock" consists of this fine missive: "Those other jokes just can't hack it/ Your momma's so old, bitch's got a Moses starter jacket." Curse you, Carl, for putting this out into the world. KR (Earth Vehicle • PO Box 652 • Buffalo, NY 14215)

THE CATALYST/BRAINWORMS • split 7"

This just sounds like Richmond to me, in a good way. THE CATALYST remind me a lot of PG.99, but way more grunge and forever entombed by a giant weed cloud. BRAINWORMS are a little harder to describe. The guitarist also used to play in STOP IT!!, but where they felt sentimental this band feels a little more bitter. There's lots of interesting guitar parts that kind of meander while the vocals are a stream of ranting and yelling like a crazy person who's been shortchanged, but just can't get anyone to listen. It all makes for a great split and the cover insures you won't easily pass it over. It's blindingly bright and a little nauseating, you can't miss it. FIL (Rorschach Records • PO Box 14712 • Richmond, VA 23221)

CEREMONY • Scared People 7"

There is a written piece on the back of this record about shaving one's head after getting stitches, I assume to show off the bruises or scars. The music itself kind of reminded me of that a little- perhaps more growly and angry than it really needed to be to get the point across. There were parts of the song "Mothers and Fathers" that I liked because they reminded me of Revelation Bands, and a Ray Beez style of vocals. On white vinyl. I wasn't crazy about this record but the layout and art looked wonderful. I think from the name I thought it might be a little more genuinely terrifying. KO (Bridge Nine Records • 119 Foster Street • Bldg 4 Suite 3 • Peabody, MA 01960 • bridge9.com)

COMADRE/TRAINWRECK • split CD

The COMADRE side is varied featuring screamo ("Camel Bucks") and melodic hardcore punk ("60 grit") tracks with PARTY OF HELICOPTERS style riffs hanging out on top of all of it along with vocals ranging from the full screamed to the melodically yelled backup. TRAINWRECK sounds at times like a bassier more metallic but equally mid tempo MODERN LIFE IS WAR that breaks into pretty straight forward but loose and sloppy hardcore fast parts as well as some generally heavy parts that remind me of TAKARU. TRAINWRECK's lyrics was sociopolitical while remaining vague enough to be poetic. I do believe TRAINWRECK's anti 9-to-5 anthem "home sweet home" ("born as cowards and champions of complacency, we are alive but just barely breathing") is going to make it on to my "fuck work" mix tape. WC (Bloodtown Records • bloodtown.com • bloodtownrecords@yahoo.com)

COPEATER/MURDER OF CROWS • split 7"

COPEATER are unrelenting. Lately it seems like very few bands are able to play really fast while retaining a lot of power in their sound. As often as the word brutal gets kicked around describing punk bands, this one fits the bill. The guitars have a swirling HERESY quality to them that's backed by a crushing drums and bass that are equal parts THREATENER and SIEGE. I wish I could say that the MURDER OF CROWS side was as exciting. They seem to be aiming for the line

between rock n' roll and punk that ANNIHILATION TIME seems to walk, but are falling a little short. The gloomy AMEBIX aspects to the songwriting just can't lift this out of that rut. However, it does not detract from how often I will listen to the COPEATER side. LAL (Scenester Credentials • scenecred.com)

CRISCO THUNDER AND THE DISSECTION SOCIETY • Demonstration CDR

Surely a legend in their own mind, if not a few others, this breaks new ground in the genre of DIY, sample-based, political dance music. It seems like it's just one person. It's like a peek inside the mind of an evil genius, whom after being banned from Las Vegas lounge-acts, now moonlights as a wedding-singer-styled people's champion of old-school-hip-hop-flavored karaoke. Most will cringe, but a few, like me, will have their minds blown. Comes with a huge and amazing hand-printed lyric booklet. For fans of the sample-collage interludes on the PLEASE INFORM THE CAPTAIN THIS IS A HIJACK LP's and the ideas expressed. FIL (criscothunder.com)

CRUSADES • 7"

I didn't think much about this record at first, but then I read the note that disclaimed "90s hardcore like LEFT FOR DEAD and CHOKEHOLD." So I went and got out an old 7" of each and afterwards I was like "yeah, totally." Somehow in that context it sounds way better. Unfortunately it does nothing for the cover art with its weird pencil drawings of castles and guillotines, but yeah, if your down with that crunchy 90's hardcore sound then you could totally get down with this. FIL (crusadeshardcore@gmail.com)

DAD THEY BROKE ME • Lack CD

Apocalyptic, devastated doom metal with a ghostly wall of sound that too often mysteriously buries everything in the murk except for the high hat. In its more pounding moments this shows nods towards some of the German greats of 90's yesteryear, with distant shrieks and short descending riffs set in a repetitive manner. Ultimately this is too destroyed and crudely executed to even resemble music, much to my personal pleasure. The last track, the 8 min. "Spat Out Rotten" is finely crafted, superbly utilizing feedback manipulation for an overall feeling of hopeless despair and total emotional surrender. Hideous. MMC (Missing Link Records • Basement 405 Bourke Street • Melbourne 3000 • VIC Australia)

DAITRO • Des Plaies Ouvertes Et Du Beton 7"

This is a one-sided tour 7" with all the limited screamo accoutrements like a screen-printed side B and hand numbered, sleeve. Even a spot for the day you bought it and where. The first song is heavy and passionate French screaming hardcore. The second is a slower, quieter instrumental. The real gem here is that the record is accompanied by a sweet 24-page quarter-sized zine that focuses on French colonialism. It's so refreshing to get something like this that not only contextualizes the music, but also challenges the listener to think. FIL (Clean Plate Records • PO Box 9461 • North Amherst, MA 01059)

DANIEL STRIPED TIGER • Capital Cities LP

I'm either fixated on the intersection of Emo, Screamo, and mid 90s indie and punk this month (not likely) or a disproportionate number of records I'm reviewing for this issue remind me of that phenomenon. This is another one. For the most part, this record's first side occupies that space with not-too-aggressive anthems (barring the stately instrumental opening track). The second side is more characteristic of the noisier, more hardcore vibe I remember from their live shows, which grabs me a whole lot more than the a-side. That said, the two instrumentals here are also really strong, deliberate, and with a lot of power. The lyrics are mostly of a vague personal/political nature though "Disconnection" may be too literal and specific. Nonetheless, keep your eye on these guys. HM (Clean Plate Records • PO Box 9461 • North Amherst, MA 01059)

DAS CAPITAL • Died True LP

A couple ex-TRAITORS get together with a few other guys for a 2nd LP's worth of, uh, well-meant post-rock (is that even a word?) with a heavy nod to NAKED RAYGUN. It's competent and well-executed, but even after a few listens, there's no musical or lyrical barbs stuck in my head afterwards. Picture a less-dramatic (i.e. corny) APOCALAPYSE HOBOKEN getting together to jam on a few riffs with GI-

ANT HAYSTACKS; what comes forth is eclectic and fairly challenging, but ultimately not terribly memorable. Sorry, you guys definitely seem sincere - I really wanted to like this one more. KR (Johan's Face Records • PO Box 479164 • Chicago, IL 60647)

THE DAUNTLESS ELITE • Graft CD

I remember not being terribly impressed with their split seven-inch with JETS VERSUS SHARKS, but this shit is fantastic. They're doing a great job at toeing the line between dark, straight-for-the-jugular anthems and tuneful, restrained pop punk. They're able to write some consistently ass-shaking tunes while still eschewing standard A-B-A-B verse-chorus-verse song structures. Like the best of LEATHERFACE and HOT WATER MUSIC, the band knows when to go full-tilt and when to utilize the minimalism of, say, just vocals and guitar for a section. The end result is a record that's both relentlessly melodic and peppered with scraped elbows and bits of gravel, all the while holding onto this sense of the melancholy (whether that's even intentional or not.) This one was a total surprise for me - wasn't expecting much and it wound up being my favorite record out of the review stuff I was sent. Nice work, gentlemen. KR (Plan-It-X Records • PO Box 14001 • Gainesville, FL 32604 • plan-it-x.com)

DEAR TONIGHT • We're Not Men CD

This is the new full length CD by the five piece band DEAR TONIGHT. This band features a member of REDS and hails from Brooklyn, NY. I see a lot of their songs being highly influenced by older bands like DAG NASTY and RITES OF SPRING but also seem to borrow from more modern influences. Some of the guitar work reminds me a little bit of END OF A YEAR and somewhat like cryonics-era HOT CROSS. The recording is a little slick for what sound they are going for but it seems to work. What I find interesting is that none of the songs seem to have an intensity that will build up to a certain point and then explode like a lot of bands in this type of genre do. If the song is intense to begin with the intensity is spread throughout the song and that also helps give it a more "driving" feeling. I am really curious to hear what this band sounds like live. I also really enjoy the cover of this record. The photo is of a plastic dinosaur in the middle of a desert. I remember driving past a place like this (perhaps it was the same place, I'm unsure) a few years ago and remembering how strange it was. This CD has 12 tracks. Well done. MM (Red leader Records)

DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR • Count Me In LP

For over a decade Chris Wrenn has been kicking music in the crotch with his boner, Bridge Nine Records. He is the Rick Ta Life of the modern age, the Tony Victory of tomorrow. Without him faux hawks and spider web tattoos might've never bridged the gap of bad hardcore with the age of Myspace showboating and secure webstore checkouts. A well-worn path on the shag carpet of the low brow, Wrenn has never been one to trouble himself with paying bands royalties, and it's a formula that works. At this pace he can afford to keep churning out more

indistinguishable releases until the last 18 year old ceases to hate his parents. And since it was AMERICAN NIGHTMARE, who eons ago gave him any cred to begin with, it should only make sense to keep the terror train rolling into today. And that's exactly where DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR is heading: right off a cliff, straight into a landfill. MMC (Bridge Nine Records • 119 Foster Street • Bldg 4 Suite 3 • Peabody, MA 01960 • bridge9.com)

DEBELI PRECJEDNIK/FAT PREZIDENT • Through the Eyes of the Innocent CD

How come the shittiest bands always have the most arrogant, self-aggrandizing press kits? Come to think of it, I guess only shitty bands even HAVE press kits. Despite their claims that "Through the Eyes of the Innocent" will shatter the fabric of space-time, DEBELI PRECJEDNIK just sounds like over-produced radio hardcore. Big, loud, boring drums; hollow, heavy guitars that are apparently only capable of playing octave chords and palm muted breakdowns; self-important, melodramatic vocals in the BAD RELIGION/LINKIN PARK vein... not especially cathartic. Also, will creepy white guys with soul patches please stop adorning their album covers with naked corpse-girls? Misogynist fantasy violence is not fucking artful. Boo, hiss, etc. BL (Moonlee Records • Pot na Breg 8 525 • Solkan, Slovenia • moonleerecords.com)

DEEP SHIT • demo tape

This is a pretty raw recording of some INFEST style hardcore. This demo contains eight tracks. There's some pretty good riffs on this cassette. I got a chance to see them play live this summer in Wisconsin and they were good. I would be interested to hear future recordings from these guys. MM (Lurk Sleep Kill • 216 Schley Pass • Madison, WI, 53703)

DELEOMETER • Demo 2006 CDR

I'm trying to streamline my thoughts here so I don't simply gush about how great this album is for an entire paragraph. It seems Europe really has the market cornered on active screamo bands that are actually decent. This two song, nine-minute demo hailing from Germany reminds me a lot of the stop and go angular guitar of OFF MINOR mixed with the denseness of VAN JOHNSON. DELEOMETER concentrates on layering wonderfully melodic and well thought out guitar parts but drops in a few heavy as hell power chord progressions. In addition: a screamo band that lists CHOKEHOLD as an influence? I'm sold. WC (Asymmetrie • C/O Daniel Bogensee • Neue Bahnhofstr. 30 • 10245 Berlin Germany • asymmetrie@gmx.net)

DENNIS • 7"

This is meandering screamo that I imagine being played by very sensitive young men. I guess it mostly reminds me of SAETIA with their quiet parts that kind of float and fall apart and then burst back to life, but I also hear some INKWELL in there. I like the hoarse tone of the



FREEDOM CAGE

AT THE ARK

Photo By Fil

vocals and the occasionally discordant guitars that keep this record from being too pretty. The songs are interesting and it really comes across that the band is feeling it, which makes all the difference. FIL (Wasted Days, Follow Dreams)

DESTRUCTORS 666/THE 925S • Storm Unt Drang split CD
DESTRUCTORS 666 are one of those bands that you swear you've heard before, or are a dead ringer for another band that you can't quite put your finger on. Best I can come up with is they're doing a pretty decent job of emulating mid-period STIFF LITTLE FINGERS if Jake Burns ate just a tad more blacktop for breakfast. It's decent stuff, for sure. THE 925S are also doing some pretty good stuff for their respective genre - they're toying around with the verging-on-dance-music angularity of groups like IKARA COLT. Only three songs by each band - it's enough to give you a feel for their sound, but it's over right about the time you start to get into it. KR (Rowdy Farrago Records c/o Flat 4 • 101, Park Road • Peterborough Cambs • PE1 2TR, ENGLAND)

DIOS HASTIO/SEPTICEMIA • split EP
DIOS HASTIO has an effective blandness that has the appeal of a store brand tooth brush: it gets the job done, even if it rubs you the wrong way. If they would've just flown me down to Peru I could've have gone into the studio and demanded that they turn that down that fucking snare! SEPTICEMIA on the other hand, eh, well they're just kinda swampy with a submerged guitar tone and a ska breakdown to punctuate their contempt for life. MMc (Vicious Interference • PO Box 2331 • Land O'Lakes FL 34639-2331)

DIRTY LOOKS/BOSSY • split 7"
DIRTY LOOKS features members of BENT OUTTA SHAPE with vocals by Gaylen from BEER GARDEN and CRYBABY MACARTHUR. It has that sloppy punk feel, but also kind of sounds like if you put on a record by THE GITS and turned it by hand, mostly because the vocals are deeper and a little off. BOSSY emphasizes the off key singing, but they are less sloppy punk and more NICO. Their songs sound like they could've been written for a Wes Andersen movie. I have a hard time getting over how ugly this record looks, but it kind of has the same charm as the music. I'm into it. FIL (Salinas Records • PO Box 20996 • Ferndale, MI • 48220)

DORY TOURETTE AND THE SKIRTHEADS • Rock Immortal LP
This is a re-release of the CD that came out on S.P.A.M. Records way back in 1999 or 2000 (who keeps track of these things?). I'll have to admit that I'm a little biased because I've loved this record for years, even though their lyrics offend the shit outta me...and I'm not easily offended!! With song titles like "My sperm comes from my eyes" and "I'm too young to be a pedophile" (sic), the casual record buyer may be tempted to pass this one up. BUT...the music is so catchy and well played and Dory croons so fucking beautifully that you ALMOST for-

give him for all of the terrible things that he sings about. So, what does it sound like? It's kind of all over the place in the best way. Mix equal parts of HICKEY, some good country twang (trust me here), EDDIE COCHRAN, some smooth cat crooner from the 50's, and classic 90's Mission District punk and you get DORY TOURETTE. In their short existence, THE SKIRTHEADS became Bay Area semi-legends and I'm jealous of the lucky folks who saw their recent reunion shows to celebrate the release of this LP. Pick this up if you're a fan of TULSA, TOMMY LASORDA, HICKEY, or SEXY. It also helps if you're not easily offended. Thanks Thrillhouse! GH (Thrillhouse Records • PO Box 460207 • San Francisco, CA 94146 • thrillhouserecords.com)

DO YOUR FUCKING DISHES • demo tape
Featuring one member of I OBJECT. Despite their dubious claim to not be a joke band this tape just sounds like generic and unremarkable punk rock. Though I do have a propensity to agree with their sentiment "fuck the pigs" - the "Do Your Fucking Dishes" intro was a bit much for me to handle. WC (Feral Kid Records • 29 Custer St. • Buffalo, NY 14214)

THE DRAGON RAPIDE • II CD
This is wandering electronic, free jazzy indie rock. It bored me though it was well executed. I think there might be audiences for this, but I am not the proper person for it. It might fit in well on films or in college radio stations. The musicianship is strong, I just stylistically did not enjoy it. Vocals might have engaged me more but wouldn't really make sense with the music. KO (Altin Village Records • Louisenstrasse 53 • 01099 Dresden • Germany • altinvillage.de)

ECOCIDE • CDR
The paint that was used on the CDR ate away at the data so I can't listen to it on either of the CD players in my house. Regardless, upon looking through the packaging and listening to the four songs on ECOCIDE's myspace, I have to say that I'm pretty into this San Antonio quintet. The music is dark and brooding, bringing together a driving WORLD BURNS TO DEATH esque sound with the bleakness of some doomier black metal bands. That being said, the politics of the band, the hopefully intentional EARTH CRISIS referencing name, and the slight UNDYING edge to their sound hint strongly at influences from the vegan metalcore spectrum- precisely my cup of tea. My only complaint is that some of the songs drag on a bit, but if you are into the slugdier aspect of their sound, you might not mind. LAL (Brian Slaughter • 114 Sunnycrest Dr • San Antonio, TX 78228)

ED • Nailed to the Board LP
According to Agipunk, the young men of Italian thrash punk outfit ED are the real thing, meaning they really skate. Rad. Between the consistently fast and tight (albeit repetitive) songs and intergalactic skate-themed cover art, ED isn't doing anything particularly new but they do what they do well and I wouldn't pass up a chance to see them live. BECK (Agipunk.com • agipunk@fastwebnet.it)

EMPTY BUILDINGS • Per Capita EP CDR
Ex-members of THE CARS THE DOORS take the chaotic energy of that band and put it to music. They stole the guitarist from SURRENDER to play bass and the difference is astounding. It's still sloppy, but more focused. There's a little bit of a MINUTEMEN influence towards the end, but mostly, this sounds just like THE YAH MOS and just as good. FIL (Empty Buildings • PO Box 3419 • Oakland, CA 94609)

ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH CRUNCH • Let's Ride CD
Oh shit! I can't surf and I can barely skate, but this makes me wanna thrash down to the beach and ride some fucking waves. I'd meet up with all of my friends and we'd camp out in the sand for the night, partying hard. ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH CRUNCH sounds just like their name implies. It's like "Free Willy" meets "Surf Ninjas," or like if Al Gore sang for the SUICIDAL TENDENCIES. It's really fun twangy surfy pop punk with songs about hanging out, camping, and saving the environment. At times the lyrics are a little over the top, but if I were in a music video (or a public service announcement) featuring one of these songs, I think I'd be having too much fun running through the hallways of a high school or riding a dirt bike in the waves of the ocean to pay attention to whether the lyrics quite met my intellectual standard. SAVE THE EARTH! PARTY ON THE BEACH! THIS RECORD RULES!!! GT (Bakery Outlet Records • PO Box 4054 • St. Augustine, FL 32085 • bakeryoutletrecords.com)

THE ERGS/GRABASS CHARLESTONS • 7"
THE ERGS sound a lot like pop punk bands from the 90's with one major difference: they're 100 times better than most pop punk bands from the 90's. You can tell that these guys studied Tony Lombardo's bass lines and Danny Panic's drumming (or maybe Bill Stevenson) and then ran with it. Total nerds in the best way. These songs are perfect for running around in the morning after drinking too much coffee and trying to do a billion things at once. If you're into Bikeage-era DESCENDENTS or the good SCREECHING WEASEL albums, this is probably for you. My only complaint is that the guitar overdub in "Every Romance Language" completely comes out of left field and whacks you in the head! Woah guys! On the other side, Gainesville's GRABASS CHARLESTONS offer up the undisputed "hit" of the record, "I Like Cats". It's a straightforward, raspy throated rocker about how the whole world is going to shit and humans are fucking rats, so they like cats. I know it sounds hokey, but they manage to pull it off beautifully. There's really no shortage of dudes rockin' the gravel-voiced, straight rock style in Gainesville, but GRABASS has always offered a little more quality and energy, which makes them stand out. It's like mixing the best elements of LEATHERFACE, old BELTONES and classic punk while still retaining a voice of its own. Plus, bass player Dave once walked out of a hot date to try and pick me up hitchhiking in Tifton, Georgia... and I barely knew him! Highly recommended. GH (No Idea • PO Box 14636 • Gainesville, FL 32604 • noidearecords.com)

EUCALYPT/SOPHORA • split 7"
This is a split 7" between two Australian bands. The packaging is really nice and handmade. The cover is made out of two sections of burlap sewn together at the seams with a black and white photocopied picture glued to the bottom right corner. The band names are typed on brown paper glued underneath the picture. The EUCALYPT side reminds me a lot of bands like LA QUIETE from Italy. I can also hear a lot of WOLVES and 12 HOUR TURN influence in there as well. Their side comes with lyrics and explanations. The SOPHORA side contains two tracks of hardcore similar to bands like COMADRE. I really enjoyed both sides of this record and I look forward to hearing more material from both bands. All around a great split! MM (heypresto. greendestroyed.com)

EVERYTHING FALLS APART • Escape 7"
This shit rules! Seven songs of hardcore punk rock, reminding me at various times of the DEGENERICS, BLACK FLAG, BAD BRAINS, THE SUICIDE FILE and THE UNSEEN. Check. The recording is super hot and fuzzy, real punk, yet you can discern individual instruments well, just the way I like it. Check. AND they fucking put it out themselves. CHECK. The vocalist's voice immediately makes me think of the DEGENERICS, but I suspect that like most people outside of New Jersey, he does not know that band. (Get on that, they fucking RULE! Probably New Jersey's best band. Ever.) THE DEGENERICS association is way positive, as that band's vocalist is one of the most disgusted,



JAPESHIT!

Photo by Fil

seething, expressive people I have ever heard recorded. While **EVERYTHING FALLS APART**'s vocalist has certainly not reached those same heights, he is reminiscent nonetheless. Their lyrics get at some of the shittier aspects of our modern world-alienation, preoccupation with shallow pursuits, becoming a civilian, and the stupid shit that people say to be "funny." I feel these lyrics. There is a real sense of honesty in them; I do not perceive much pretense here. They keep the tempo mixed up both from song to song and within songs. This is a really solid release. I want more! CH (self released • everythingfallsapart.org • turnuptuneout@hotmail.com)

EVICITION PARTY/LEPER • split tape

EVICITION PARTY plays that **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN/JAWBREAKER/DEFIANCE**, OHIO style of music that is all the rage these days. Lyrics about bikes and trains. **LEPER** is a metal/ska/grind/thrash band. Not kidding. CH (\$3ppd or trade, Sharpie Fumes Collective • PO Box 31224 • Halifax NS, B3K 5Y1 • Canada)

ENIAC/EXPERIMENTAL DENTAL SCHOOL • split CD

ENIAC offers a fairly typical post-HXC outing: choppy drums with tight, ample fills, lots of melodic bass/guitar interplay, and vocals that ride the line between charismatic street-preaching and anguished mod introspection. The first two of **ENIAC**'s three songs are interesting enough, if rather predictable. "mole people", however, veers into more exciting territory - it's almost B-52'sy! - with sweetly creepy co-ed group choruses, a catchy bass hook that thumps along like an amplified slinky, and droning nonsense lyrics awash in fat, pleasant guitar noodling. **EDS** is just kind of weird. Another case of "we dug up some old synths at a garage sale and started a band that sounds like computers talking to circus animals". There are some engaging noise-textures here, but they come and go without much focus. The vocals are mostly superfluous and basically just accentuate the drummer's snare hits. The recording itself is probably more satisfying than the band - smooth and warm with lots of hard panning. Next time you and yrs have a circuit bending party, break this out after a few beers and it will make perfect sense. Electrical engineering grad students who minored in painting will love every minute. BL (The Company with the Golden Arm • twtga.org)

FALL OF EFRAFA • EP CD

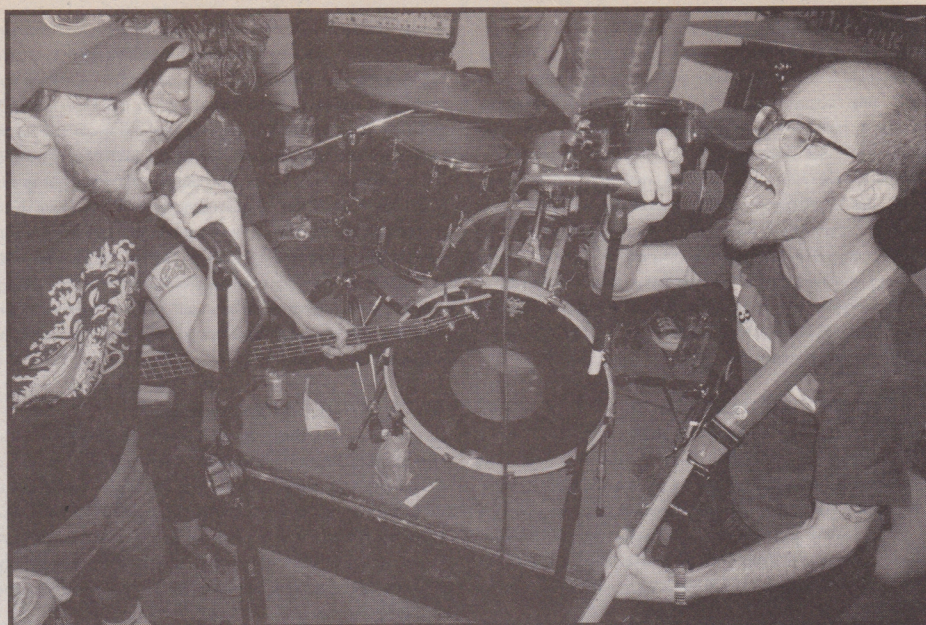
YES! The second installment of the three part epic has arrived. In case you missed out the first time around, **FOE** play patient, eerie, melodic crust crescendo's culminating in full speed ahead hardcore punk ala **REMAINS OF THE DAY**. These three miniature symphonies are very long, but worth every second. Once again, this release may be appreciated more for it's entirety rather than for it's individual tracks. Strongly recommended. MT (Halo of flies Records • 430 E. Loydd St. • Milwaukee, WI 53212 • haloofflies@hotmail.com)

FATAL • 7"

FATAL is a punk band from Hagen, Germany with members of **MISFIT SOCIETY**. This is their first 7". The music is pretty similar in style to bands like **BOMBENALARM** and **SEVERED HEAD OF STATE**. This 7" contains four songs of pissed off d beat style punk rock with songs like "3rd class reject" and "human waste". The artwork is a somewhat glossy photo of a crusty looking doll poking her eye out with a wooden rod. Lyrics and information included on the insert. MM (Drachenwerkstatt • Auerstr. 51 • D45468 Mulheim/Ruhr • Germany)

FIRE TEAM CHARLIE/DAMEZUMARI • split LP

This is a split LP between two bands from the U.S. **FIRE TEAM CHARLIE** is from Houston, Texas and brings us Five tracks of melodic emo style hardcore that seems like a cross between bands like **END OF A YEAR** and **SINALOA**. Sometimes heavily Melodic, other times with more of a stop/start kind of feel. Their lyrics are about things like staying positive, long distance relationships, and frustrations. **DAMEZUMARI** is from Tulsa, Oklahoma and contributes four tracks to this split. The vocals of this band remind me a lot of how **HOT CROSS** vocals were spoken/screamed. I also hear quite a bit of **SAETIA** influence on their side. The LP comes with a nicely two color screened LP cover on brown chipboard and a booklet with all lyrics and information that is well put together and contains interesting ideas. All together a really nice split. MM



REACTIONARY 3

AT THE ARK

Photo By Fil

FLESHIES • Baby LP

Mid-tempo rockin punk with lots of solos and blown-out vocals reminiscent of **JELLO BIAFRA** at times. Seventeen songs, raw, distorted production, and no lyric sheet. Has a drawing of a baby on the cover. Good for what it is, not really my deal though. CH (Thrillhouse Records • PO Box 460207 • San Francisco, CA 94146 • thrillhouse-records.com)

THE FOUR EYES • Five Songs About Video Games and One About Something Else CD

Bands with gimmicks can get on my nerves, and **THE FOUR EYES** are a band with a gimmick. But when a band takes gimmick and pushes it so far past the point of tolerance, to the point that everyone in the room who doesn't "get it" has left and gone home but the band is still rocking out enthusiastically, they will inevitably earn a place on my all time favorites list. **THE FOUR EYES** have done just that. They play sloppy Sacramento style pop punk in the vein of **NAR** or the **BANANAS**, and with a **YARDBIRDS** style 60's garage streak. And here's the selling point: they sing exclusively AND hilariously about being nerds. This time around the topic of conversation is RPG's. I know nothing about RPG's and as near as I can tell all six songs are about video game characters, but who knows? Everything about this is so far over the top that I have to like it. The video game themed artwork is guaranteed to leave your graphic design friends horrified. I won't ruin the surprise ending, but the close of the album pushes the limits of nerd rock so far, that even in the comfort of my own apartment, listening to this record sent my metalcore-loving roommate out for the day. Fantasy garage rock at it's unprecedented finest: if you never thought singing about video games could be subversive, **THE FOUR EYES** are here to prove you wrong. GT (Thrillhouse Records • PO Box 460207 • San Francisco, CA 94146 • thrillhouserecords.com)

FREE VERSE • Arranging the Dead LP

Three women playing metallic hard rock. Many of the vocals remind me of a blown-out version of Jess from **FIGHTING DOGS**. The lyrics are a mixture of somewhat obtuse personal and political songs. The drummer is excellent. Six songs. This is their final record. The packaging is really nice - thick cardstock folded in half, fully and intricately screened on all sides. Don't know if this is the only way they released this record, but the version I reviewed is an lp that comes with a cd as well. Also includes a short history of the band. Despite recently being recorded by Jack Endino, I found the production noticeably lacking, particularly the guitar and bass sounds. CH (?)

THE FUCKING WRATH • Season of Evil LP

This record opens up with a slow dirge, rising out of a dense fog, threatening to fall back on lazy, bluesy **SABBATH** riffs that have saturated the world of heavy music in the past few years, and suddenly (and pleasantly) kicks into gear with some dark pummeling hardcore that

everyone and their mothers' band seems to have recognized the power of since **TRAGEDY** did their first US tour. Unfortunately the stoner rock riffs do kick back in for a bit, but as much as I'm not a fan of the genre, it seems well executed. By the time the third song roles around, I'm intrigued. I bet this band is really fucking loud live. At first I thought that this was going to be one of those records that has really good parts, but no cohesive songs, but after I flip the record, everything is seeming to mesh really well. Personal preferences aside, this record is well recorded, well written, and well packaged. The black paper record sleeve is a fantastic touch, however I still retain my doubts that anything that sounds truly evil will ever come out of California. LAL (Challenge to the Throne • 2403 Peacock Ave • Ventura, CA 93303 • challengethethrone@hotmail.com)

FUTURE VIRGINS • 7"

This is an energetic, fun punk record. It definitely has the same sound as a lot of what I have grown to expect from **Plan-It-X**, which isn't always my cup of tea but which I really appreciate. The lyrics are positive: about coming out of adversity on top. The guitars are jangly and catchy, despite a bit of strange mix overall which leaves the bass end kind of low. These are songs for dancing along in a basement, covered in sweat. Little Steppenvulf is my favorite song - very dancy. KO (Plan-It-X South • 720 Pickens Ave • Pensacola FL 32503 • plan-itxsouth.com)

FUTURE VIRGINS • Part II: Words & Sounds 7"

The moment the needle hit the first groove of this record, I was sold. Folks from **Sexy & Jack Palance Band** belting out **Poppy** punk rock that is equal parts '90s East Bay and UK '77, but firmly rooted in Chattanooga. Do yourself a favor. Buy this 7", their previous 7", and cross your fingers for more soon. This shit's loud, blown-out, snotty, and the best new record I've heard this year. SP (Plan-It-X South • 720 Pickens Ave • Pensacola FL 32503 • plantixsouth.com)

GEORGE MOSHINGTON • Attack EP

When some daring and senselessly determined soul scrapes together the hundreds of bucks needed to cough up a record of a band with the most unforgivable name since the **FALLOPIAN DUDES**, who then conceives a collage on the cover with George W. Bush's head pasted over Hitler while a KKK-hooded Mickey Mouse sucks his dick, try and imagine how many bags of Cool Ranch Doritos this guy could've eaten with all that money. MMc (Gilgongo Records • PO Box 7455 • Tempe, AZ 85281)

GERDA • Cosa Dico Quando Non Parlo CD

GERDA tries to blend Bill Laswell's **PAINKILLER** bass parts with quasi-melodic guitar noise (in the vein of **THE EX** but less jagged) and insane, over saturated drums that careen between driving, snare-heavy breakdowns and the chaos of something that sounds like the drummer hitting everything at once really fast. The end-product is, like,

frustratingly intense. Halfway through the first track, when you finally regain consciousness, you realize that, despite feeling very threatened and overwhelmed, you are unable to discern much in the way of songwriting. Imagine THE SPECTACLE trying to play their albums backwards while blindfolded. It's kind of awesome and kind of just mind-boggling and unapproachable. "Vendicare Questo Orrore", the sixth track, comes closest to what I would consider a true song, and it fucking rips. If GERDA can tame the inputs on their reel-to-reel a little bit and stop overdosing on speed before they write albums, they will be onto something really powerful. Recommended if you get your kicks on fringe-noise hardcore that would be best performed on the edge of a cliff for people who only communicate with harsh glances and hand signals. BL (Shove Records • via Don Minzoni n.3 • 15100 Alessandria • Italy • shoverecords.com)

GET RAD/PROTESTANT • split 7"

Two down-tuned, pissed off Milwaukee bands team up for a 7" with a ridiculous cover. GET RAD play mid-paced, TRAGEDY-meets-Louisville hardcore with positive, tongue-in-cheek lyrics. PROTESTANT is a gloomy, crushing, dynamic hardcore band that has done a great job of making a side of an EP feel pretty fucking epic. It may seem lazy of me to compare them to HHIG, but if the bullet belt fits... SP (Barbarian Records • 254 West Gilman St. • Madison WI 53703)



DIRTY LOOKS

PHOTO BY DAVE SANDERS

GHADDAR/PANACEJA • split 7"

GHADDAR is a band from Allentown, PA that plays sloppy thrash to mid-tempo thrash/punk. A lot of blast-beats with choppy vocals that sound a lot like Ray Cappo. PANACEJA plays super fast thrash/power violence and are from Croatia. They could easily have been found on the POSSESSED TO SKATE 12" Comp. I have to say the layout is terrible - it seems like they put very little effort (or a rushed sort-of effort) into it. Overall this is Ok. GH. (Feral Kid Records • 29 Custer St. • Buffalo, NY 14214)

GRAVE, SHOVEL, LET'S GO! • tape

When Fil gave this to me, he said "This is really good. It sounds like OFF MINOR without the jazz." He was pretty much right. Four lengthy songs of noodley screamo with lots of vocals going on at all times, mostly sung. Good music, good vocals, no lyric sheet included, no info on members. This band is from Germany. Oh, good recording too. CH (Asymmetrie • C/O Daniel Bogensee • Neue Bahnhofstr. 30 • 10245 Berlin Germany • asymmetrie@gmx.net)

GUIDA • 12"

GUIDA is from Italy and play a mix of dark crusty hardcore, with more hardcore punk then crust, as in more catchy and interesting than most generic crust out there. It can range from more metallic crust to almost

a gang-vocal style hardcore, rooted in other Italian hardcore bands of the 80s. I'm finding it hard to compare this record to other bands, it's unique in that way, and that's a pretty good thing. It's kinda got that Latino punk beat going on, so I could compare it to bands like LOS CRUDOS, or OUTRAGED (but slower), and that would make some sense if you also mixed in bands like DETESTATION and GAUZE, and Scandinavian crust. A mix of styles that work really well on this record. Just be aware that the label on the record has the wrong speed on it (not 45rpm). The cover artwork and insert has a pretty rad layout, simple and stark, with lyrics in Italian and English. The lyrics are good; vague, dark, and most-importantly, not boring or typical. Their label is Agipunk, which puts out a lot of crust stuff, and people should check it out to read what other bands these members were in. GH (agipunk.com • agipunk@fastwebnet.it)

HALF GORILLA • Graceless Beasts 7"

Sounds like punks playing metal. Upside-down crosses, beast skulls, demon cherubs and song titles in CRASS stenciled lettering. The music is exactly what you expect. It's heavy, and evil sounding with technical guitar stuff going on. It's a little AT THE GATES and a little HELLNATION, but without much personality of their own. It's not necessarily bad, but just a little lukewarm and safe. The lyrics are especially forgettable. I'm guessing most people will pick this up based on the

but for the most part this reminds me more of just really uninteresting indie rock with really whiny vocals. MM (Modern Radio Record Label • PO Box 8886 • Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408)

THE HOLY KISS • Shot Love on a Backline CD

Raw, bluesy, melancholy songs with a touch of the southern gothic and a streak of gloomy cabaret. I like the way the bass and drums play lightly against the guitar, avoiding a lot of pitfalls a band playing this kind of bourbon-soaked black and red punk blues could fall into. Fans of LOVE LIFE and NICK CAVE might vibe to this. THE HOLY KISS could be the band playing in a rural southern bar in a Poppy Z. Brite vampire novel. There's also a suitably moodily romantic version of an Erik Satie piece on here as well. HM (Release the Bats • c/o Matthias Andersson • Nymanegatan 53 • 41508 Goteborg • Sweden)

JAPANATHER/THE GOOD GOOD • split 7"

I think this was a tour 7" which somehow explains the minimal packaging, but also it just looks great that way. There's almost no information, just the band names at the top and bottom-dripping into each other in white on pink. JAPANATHER jump right into the party with their fuzzed-out bass and drum dance-punk. The rest of their side kind of mellows out, but maintains a groove. THE GOOD GOOD take the opposite approach starting off with a flute heavy, new age, spacey jam that reminds me of something you might hear in a Discovery Zone type of nature store, but then they bust into one of my favorite songs of theirs. It's one of the songs they jam on the keypad of a megaphone. I mean, I guess it's all one song. I'm into it. FIL (Altin Village Records • Louisenstrasse 53 • 01099 Dresden • Germany • altinvillage.de • Mine Records)

JESSE KRAKOW • I Hate Everyone And Especially You CDR

88 track CDR of short, mostly acoustic songs performed in an offhand manner that in most cases are a painful attempt at irony. To say that Krakow's music echoes traces of MOTHERS OF INVENTION or CAPTAIN BEEFHEART would be giving it way too much credit. Instead, these unpolishable turds are nothing but a poser shot at outsider weirdness, disqualified by their obvious and insincere self-awareness. As my girlfriend dutifully noted as she sat patiently by stereo, fingering through the weekend edition of The New York Times, "What a waste of time." MMc (427 Ft. Washington Ave #24 • New York, NY 10033)

JINN • CD

Heavy, evil, technically proficient metal with growly vocals. It trudges along at times and then gets super fast and tough. Somewhere between CONVERGE and CATHARSIS. The lyrics appear to have been written with the metal-core version of a refrigerator-magnet poetry set. FIL (SuperFi Records • Flat 15, The Jacobs Building • Burton Court, Bristol • 858 1AL • superfirerecords.co.uk)

JOSE PHINE • 3" CDR

This three inch CDR took three days to get out of my laptop. I figured since it was still a CDR it would have no problem working in my computer, but boy was I wrong. I was able to get the CDR out and had to dig up my old boom box from middle school to listen to this CDR. So what did I hear? Screamo. I hate to use that word because I think it is pretty silly, however that is how you could categorize this band. They pull a lot of the same sounds as their screamo forefathers. Loud dissonant guitars, fast paced riffs, clash against screechy indistinguishable vocals that slow down into a melodic lull. It's not anything I haven't heard before but for what it is, it's not to bad. I will say that it's cool hearing D.I.Y. music coming out of Ipoh, Malaysia. GF

JUST ANOTHER CONSUMER • CDR

(hey, we couldn't get this to play, send in another one.)

KATASTROFIALUE • Vapaus On Vankila 7"

Finnish d-beat recorded in 1998 that sounds exactly as it should: raw, aggressive, and totally fucking pissed. Of course, the DISCHARGE influence makes itself very clear from the start, but there is more depth to their sound than dis-aping. At its finer moments, a Japanese influence shines through, particularly in vocal delivery. Finnish lyrics, with English translations. I wouldn't exactly say that this band is breaking any new ground, but they don't really need to. A fine addition to any 7" collection consisting of mostly black & white records with riot scenes on the cover. SP (Vicious Interference • PO Box 2331 • Land O'Lakes FL 34639-2331)

satanic gorilla priest on the cover and most of those people won't be disappointed. FIL (Halo of Flies c/o Cory Von Bohlen • 430 E. Lloyd St. • Milwaukee, WI 53212 • haloofflies@hotmail.com)

HEY GIRL! • Spill Your Guts 12"

The new HEY GIRL! songs on here are fucking awesome! They maintain the super-raw live intensity and the energetic feel of the last demo and then add a little more depth. And the recording is still pleasantly sloppy in all the right ways. Great lo-fi trashy-punk anthems from this bay-area all-girl punk band. My only complaint is that they sneak in re-recorded songs from the demo. I just don't think you can ever recapture that shit and it leaves out the other amazing songs from that tape. I would've been more into having all new songs on one side and all their demo songs on the other. Whatever, this is still crucial. FIL (Thrillhouse Records • PO 460207 • San Francisco, CA 94146 • thrillhouserecords.com)

HIS MISCHIEF • Summer's Eve CD

This cd which pretty much looks like a CDR demo came with a one sheet which was an instant turnoff. This band features members of SEAN NA NA and THE MONARQUES. That doesn't make me any more interested. Their one sheet tells me that they sound like SPOON mixed with THE WHO. I beg to differ. I don't think this band sounds anything like THE WHO. I can hear some influence of SPOON in this

KILLEUR CALCULATEUR • demo tape

I didn't really know what to make of this tape as soon as I popped it into my stereo. I was welcomed to something that sounded familiar but at the same time was refreshing and fun! Killeur Calculateur from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, play their own brand of punk that is unpredictable from parts that remind me of Stop It!! to Q and not U. This band has a really good vibe to them. Everything from the music to the packaging of this demo feels sincere in a way that you don't run into often, and this tape was a pleasure to listen to. I can't wait to see what these folks do next. GF (Utarid Tapes • utaridtapes@yahoo.com)

THE KNOCKDOWN • The Nights I Can't Remember... CD

Really anthemic pop-punk with lots of woo!!!, whoa!!!! woowoo!!! It's catchy with slightly gruff vocals, overly melodic in a safe radio-formula way. It is a little bit reminiscent of LEATHERFACE, THE INSURGENT, or stuff on No Idea. It also sounds very radio-mainstream-friendly, which is kind of a dis' in my books. The slow song they feel they have to include is painfully like something from MATHEW GOOD BAND, or GOO GOO DOLLS; I'm sorry but this makes me wince. On top of that they have a "hidden track" (?) that sounds like a bad rip-off of DEFIANCE, OHIO. Yikes. GH (Raise Your Fist Records • raiseyourfistrecords.com)

KOROVA • If There Is A Future 7"

These are the demo recordings of KOROVA from Birmingham, Alabama. They play a very lo-fi street punk style, with strange parts that are all over the place, with some really bad ska thrown in for good measure. This sounds like a bad teenage punk band that tried to incorporate too many styles, or just didn't know what they were doing. The recording is all over the place, since I think most songs are taken from different recording sessions. This 7" wouldn't have to be so bad, but then they include a letter to prospective distros and reviewers where they have to mention they "opened for Lars Frederiksen and the Bastards...and countless others...they were one of the bands of the modern underground era of cliques and lame subcultural dogma that somehow appealed to the "old school" purists, the crusts, the skinheads, the straight edge kids, psychobillies, and the metalheads, all of which turned out for their shows en masse without ever so much as a fight." Wow. I wish they didn't write that letter. I feel like they are sincere, but just straight-up bad. GH. (Victimized Records • Ian Wise • 2413 Gaylord Rd • Joliet, IL 60435)

KYKLOOPIEN SUKUPUUTO • LP

KYKLOOPIEN SUKUPUUTO are a punk band from Tampere, Finland. The same area of Finland that brought you such bands as KAAOS and RIISTETYT, although this band doesn't remind me of either of those bands. They play a style of pretty crusty and rugged hardcore punk. Biggest surprise of the record- one of the songs starts with a disco-style drumbeat. This record kind of jumps around in styles somewhat and I didn't find it very memorable/impressive. Something that did stand out to me quite a bit though was the packaging of the record. The packaging of this record is pretty impressive. 1000 were made with matte finish covers with their name in embossed letters. A really nice touch. The insert was also nicely made. It is the full size of the record and features all lyrics (in both Finnish and English). MM (Hate Records • PO Box 10 58 24 • 28058 Bremen • Germany)

LAKE ME • Solace CD

I really wasn't into this. The songs are kind of midtempo and lackluster. Vocalist Nathalie Stern's voice is technically proficient, but weighty without feeling in any way urgent. The songs are folky and reminds me of the band FAUN FABLES. There are a lot of folky strumming patterns, and cooing vocals. I suppose it is indie rock more than folk, or somewhere in between. It just didn't grab me by the throat at all. I am not into some of the 6/8 time signatures - it seems they use this each time for the songs that are intended to be more of the rock songs. The packaging is a screened cardboard case, which is nice, with a neat flower design on the front. KO (lakememusic.net)

LIAR'S ACADEMY • 7"

This is the soundtrack to my own personal hell. Watch out JIMMY EAT WORLD, these social climbers have got your number. Side A sounds like the cheesy motivational music that would accompany a montage in an 80's movie. Side B sounds like it could have actually been written by Cassandra's backup band in Wayne's World. I can't help but think

that when I was first getting into punk this was exactly the kind of music that I was rebelling against. FIL (Goodwill Records • C.P. 15319 • 00143 Roma Laurentino • Italy)

LIFE EXTINCTION • Lo Unico Seguro en la Vida es La Muerta CD

From Mexico, LE play a hybrid of screamo and fast melodic hardcore, not to over simplify their creative efforts, but they may be the Mexican counterpart to bands like THE SPECTACLE. The vocals may be mixed a little too high for some tastes, but in the very least it demonstrates the intensity and passion they have as the vocals waver on the brink of exhaustion. MT (exabrupto records • exabrupto80@hotmail.com • exabruptodistro.com)

LIMITED EXPRESS (HAS GONE?) • Makes You Dance CD

My experience with Japanese bands has been pretty positive. This band is no exception. This record fucking rules! Every track brings something different to the table. LIMITED EXPRESS paints a colorful sonic soundscape with a childlike playfulness and creativity. Some of the faster paced songs with blast beats and razor-like guitars remind me of MELT BANANA while other tracks are quirky and are reminiscent of DEERHOOF. Regardless of what this album reminds me of, this is an exciting album and most definitely worth picking up. GF (The Company with the Golden Arm • tcvtga.org)

THE LOW BUDGETS • Leave Us A Loan CD

THE LOW BUDGETS, who feature punk heartthrob JOE JACK TALCUM of excellent solo material and DEAD MILKMEIN fame in their line-up, play a genre of ska and punk influenced, organ laden rock'n'roll they like to call "valu-rock" ("Minimum Effort = Maximum Pleasure"). This record is all killer no filler, except I'm kind of over humorous in between song skits. But I admit they add to the overall "keeping it realness" of a record, so it's okay. Anyway, the LOW BUDGETS write great songs. Solid snotty cuts like "Fat Cop," "Wipe My Ass With the World," and "Shit," (the latter being in reference to what you smell like, feel like, and look like) as well as adorable classic Talcum track "Craft Fair." After listening to the record over and over (and liking it better every time up until the point of absurd oversaturation) my favorite song was "Signals," which has everything I look for in a love song: alluding to being a romantic fuckup, dates of drinking 40s until dark, and the following seductive couplet: "Do you want to get a milkshake sometime?/You must be an angel 'cause that sounds divine." I do I do I do. Play DC again soon please. BECK (Chuunksaah Records • PO Box 977 • Asbury Park, NJ 07712)

MANVILLE • Gettin' Freak Nasty 7"

At least you know what you're getting into, right? This starts off sounding like melodic metalcore with haunting guitar riffs that won't go away. The second song adds more driving heavy rock influences

and by the last song it just starts to sound like WHITE ZOMBIE. Some people are going to love this. It's the musical equivalent of an ambiguously ironic mullet or moustache. The soundtrack to getting drunk and sweaty. I also would've accepted DUDEVILLE or BROVILLE. FIL (Yosada • PO Box 15404 • Boise, ID 83715)

MATTY POP CHART • Everyone does Everything CD

I've heard MATTY POP CHART described as "the PAUL SIMON of the Pepsi generation." Maybe that just got stuck in my head, but this record is the closest thing to a punk "Graceland" I've ever heard. Matt Tobey is the musical prodigy behind Matty Pop Chart and on this record he impressively plays guitar, bass, drums, harmonica, accordion, violin, piano, bells and all kinds of other crazy shit in his own unique style. It makes for a beautiful folk pop record that your parents might like just as much as you do. Matt's lyrics are honest and poetic and carry the same weight as KIMYA DAWSON's brand of straightforward sincerity. I will complain that outside of the three instrumental tracks there are only 8 full songs on here. Still, it's as close to a masterpiece as Matt's gotten yet, so many recommendations and thumbs up here. GT (\$5ppd • Plan-It-X South • P.O. Box 14001 • Gainesville FL 32604 • plan-it-x.com)

MARGARET THRASHER • Does It Matter? 7"

These three songs start off with a jolt and don't let up. The music has the same catchy early-hardcore punk feel of bands like THE REGULATIONS, but with much more abrasive vocals that grab you by the throat. The lyrics are equally abrasive and deal with issues such as creeps in our scene and wanting higher standards in relationships and not wanting to praise someone for giving the minimum amount of respect. There's also a song called "Blah Blah Blah My Community" which I think is one of the best song titles ever. FIL (Clarence Thomas Records)

THE MEASURE/MODERN MACHINES • split 7"

Upon my initial listen, I thought that THE MEASURE [sa] was sort of bad and a little too polished for my tastes. I listened to their side a few more times though and realized that the first song, "Portland" is actually pretty good. It's not anything I would listen to at home, but I can picture a kid totally rockin' out to it while putting it on a mixtape for a good friend. It's got a classic indie-punk feel to it with clear, well sung female vocals, not unlike LEMURIA. Their other song is a BOB DYLAN cover ("It ain't me, babe") and I feel like it just falls flat. Ugh. You've got to have something better than a BOB DYLAN cover, don't you? The flip side is Milwaukee's own walking rock n' roll encyclopedias, THE MODERN MACHINES. My roommate said, "I'd like 'em better if their songs were shorter." Well, here ya' go! These songs both clock in around 2 minutes and are rockin' in that REPLACEMENTS/BENT OUTTA SHAPE/HUSKER DU way that the MODERN MACHINES are known for. If you already like this band, you know what you're in for and you're probably going to buy it no matter what I say.



SLEEPYTIME TRIO

12/01/07

Photo By Fil

If you're curious about them, I'd say to start elsewhere. They have better songs than this. GH (Salinas Records c/o Marco Reosti • PO Box 20996 • Ferndale, MI 48220)

MEHKAGO • NT CD

Powerful and Creary live song ep that delivers some serious deep dish, no thin "crust" if you get my meaning. There may be shared member or members of TORCHE among the ranks. Over all, a decent mix of extremely heavy crust and hardcore. MT (To Live a Lie Records • 1306 Flint Pl • Raleigh, NC 27605 • tolivealie.com)

THE MOCK HEROIC • Dignified Exits CD

Discordant, full of weird time signatures and yowled vocals and ten million parts per song it's that screamo bidness all the kids are going ape over. Jazzy and intricate, yet I always feel like THE MOCK HEROIC's right on the cusp of blowing things up and totally freaking out and therefore making things interesting, but never do. So there's this sense of restraint threaded throughout the album, like they're holding themselves back, afraid to really let loose. As a result, it makes it damn hard to delegate this to anything much more than background music. They can definitely play their instruments, but there's no real feeling or tension being translated. KR (SuperFi Records • Flat 15 • The Jacobs Bldg • Bristol BS8 1EE • UK)

MOM'S ON STRIKE • demo CDR

Wow! What a fun demo from this quirky band from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia! The demo's packaging immediately caught my eye. The art work is collaged and classically punk. This band's sound is just as great as its artwork. Stop start punk, interesting dynamics, and awesome female vocals. In the insert they assure that no moms were hurt during the making of this demo. This is a fun band and worth looking into! GF (momsonstrike@yahoo.com)

NOISY SINS OF THE INSECT/DAIGHILA • tape

DAIGHILA, from Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, play metallic screamo with lots of techy guitar parts and indecipherable, almost shrieking vocals that sound just like REVERSAL OF MAN. There's one killer breakdown that sounds all eerie like CLIKATAI IKATOWI and one youth crew shout out. I wish there was more weirdness like that to mix it up. NSOTI are a screamy hardcore band from Turkey that are obsessed with death. Every song with lyrics is about death. Usually, apparently, caused by love or the lack of it. It goes from being emo to being disturbing to being completely inappropriate. This is a cry for help. If you're writing lyrics like "I cut her face, Lora is only mine! I killed her and I'm smiling, this is very funny!" you NEED to talk to someone. That shit needs to be analyzed not amplified. Ugghhhh... trash. FIL (Utard Tapes • utarditapes@yahoo.com • instillserenity@yahoo.com • noisysinsoftheinsect@yahoo.com)

THE NOJONS • 7"

This is the type of super catchy, juvenile pop-punk that I thought was killed by Warped tour jocks and Hot Topic mall punks. THE NOJONS make it accessible and fun again for those of us who don't like to leave the basements. These songs are silly and catchy, but unlike THE DESCENDENTS or ANGRY SAMOANS you can enjoy them without feeling shitty about the sketchy lyrics. My only complaint is that three out of four of these songs were already on demos (and the new song is the weak link.) But whatever, even if you don't get this record, you're bound to hear "California 1983" on a shit load of "Summer Jams" mix tapes. FIL (Punks Before Profits • PO Box 1148 • Grand Rapids, MI 49501)

OLDE GHOST • 7"

Are you nostalgic for 90's post-hardcore? I'll admit that I am. This sounds mostly like DRIVE LIKE JEHU, but with a little SLEEPY-TIME TRIO and then I even hear a little taste of SNAPCASE in there. Five songs that are driving, energetic, rockin and heavy in that GLASS & ASHES kind of way. I enjoy it. FIL (Hand Stand Records • PO Box 110398 • Brooklyn, NY 11211)

ONE REASON/THE BECAUSE • split 7"

I picked this up for ONE REASON and their side is great but I was blown away by THE BECAUSE. Their two songs here have all the energy that I usually associate with sloppy-punk bands, but this isn't sloppy at all, it's got more of a larger-than-life rock n' roll thing go-

ing on. Parts of the first song remind me of THIS IS MY FIST while the second song has more of a FOURTH ROTOR attitude to it. Also, they're from Japan where this was co-released. ONE REASON offer up a kind of slow, twangy, and slightly contrived pop-punk song and a cranked-up version of an ERIN TOBEY song. Both bands sound great, with recordings that are crisp and clear, but still loud and not too clean. FIL (Salinas Records • PO Box 20996 • Ferndale, MI 48220)

ORDER OF THE WHITE ROSE • Ghosts of the Sidewalk 7"

Uh, I feel kind of weird reviewing this record since I did the back cover art and all of the layout, but it was sent to me for review, so there you go. WHITE ROSE is a punk band from Hawaii. This is a 2-song 7" with all proceeds going to food banks in Oahu and Maui. Both songs are topical, smart and over before you know it; the band gets in, says their piece, and jets. "Ghosts of the Sidewalk" tackles the issue of homelessness and the B-side, "Seeds of Destruction", brings up the issue of bioengineering. There's really not much else to say, except that bands like this are seemingly becoming more and more rare- there's no pretension here, no hair-waving sass, no lyrical guardedness in which the listener has no clue as to what the fuck the band's yelling about. You know what these guys are yelling about. Nor do they try to lay down a smokescreen of instrumental fuckery- they just play the song and move on to the next one. Like I said, they're punk, and there really aren't that many bands like them around these days. KR (Hawaiian Express Records • PO Box 11871 • Honolulu, HI 96828)

ORSAGO • CD

After the first few listens, I just wanted to go off on this turd. But I'm going to rein myself in and try to keep it short. So, we're looking at ten songs of tight and admittedly well-executed screamo, ala much of THREE ONE G and GSL's rosters. Unfortunately, it's coupled with such a cloying sense of sassiness, of we the listeners not being privy to the band's inside jokes that I have a hard time taking this thing seriously at all. Take the lyrics to, uh, "Turtle Rocks Fucker", for instance: "Dreaming so big malons/ My face on malons/ Something of magic, of magic/ Between my legs/ I'm so sweat, so sweat/ I swim to the beach/ I pick some shell tits/ Oooo, oooo, oooo, oooo/ Shell tits." Sweet, guys, nice work. The whole album is equally mired in vapidness and stupidity. It's records like this that make me fucking hate hardcore sometimes, and it's bands like this that make me want to sell my record collection and listen exclusively to talk radio. KR (Holidays Records • holidaysrecords.it)

PAPERMOONS • 7"

This 7" has a very breezy, intimate and distant feel to it. PAPERMOONS is a duo from Houston, Texas and on this 7" they bring us four tracks of their pretty chill and nostalgic music. I can definitely see a lot of OWEN influence in this but I don't find the vocals or guitar work half as interesting. The B side songs remind me somewhat also of DAMIEN RICE. The vinyl on this record is a nice mixture of blue and white splatter vinyl and the artwork is a collection of handpainted birds like a lot of other indie rock releases. The 7" also comes with a CDR of the same songs. MM (Team Science • 1702 Highland Glen • Pearland, Texas. 77581)

PAUL BARIBEAU • Grand Ledge CD

Some artists are good on record but absolutely amazing live. You can appreciate the songs on the record, but you can't really appreciate the artist until you see them live. PAUL BARIBEAU fits into that category and I think he knows it. Live, his sparse one man, one guitar style rarely leaves anyone in the audience unmoved, due to his genuinely frantic enthusiasm and sincerity. This is his second full length and it's just him and a guitar, and one microphone. Basically it serves as a replication of the live act so you can learn the songs and sing along when he comes through your town and sleeps on your couch. I like to think of Paul as a rambling punk BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, and of these records as the demos he put out before he hit it big. This is a short record at only 9 songs, and it sounds like things have been looking up for Paul. So much of the depression from his first record is missing here and honestly it makes for a less intense listen. Still there are a couple of absolutely heart wrenching hits on here. Those songs make this album worth having so you can listen to them over and over again, even if it's not as consistent a record all the way through. GT (\$5ppd • Plan-It-X • P.O. Box 14001 • Gainesville, FL 32604 • plan-it-x.com)

PENCHEBLENDE • Collapse CD

The slower, heavier, build up parts could be likened to watching an avalanche fall from a distance, but without any warning you are placed right in the middle of this natural disaster with heavy as hell down tuned hardcore as your sound track to an early grave. PENCHEBLENDE enjoy taking their time and spare no expense when it comes to making their seamless transitions creating brand new scopes of panic. MT (tuned to you records)

PETE THE PIRATE SQUID • Don't Correct Me if I'm Wrong CD

Every so often you get a CD that catches you off guard with how exciting, captivating and groundbreaking it is. That is how I feel about the PETE THE PIRATE SQUID full length. The vocals are frantic, with lyrics address a broad range of social and personal topics with a Political perspective. The music is angular and nervous - it is urgent in the kind of way that brings the listener to a place of questioning and thoughtfulness. Some Portions of songs have jazzier arrangements, with noodly drum fills and basslines. It is obvious that these musicians have listened to heavy bands, as there are some chuggy, breakdowny parts, but Jana's vocals also explore a more delicate, imploring side in parts. I love the song title "All My Friends Put Records Out," and I adore the label Altin Village that put this band out. "All Girl Freak Show" fascinated me most, as a song addressing the way in which women are perceived in punk. There are a number of memorable lines throughout this record - "You reach up/you knock shit over." Songs get stuck in my head and I like them being there. PLEASE GET THIS RECORD if you like guitar driven, passionate, complex and catchy music to challenge you. PLEASE GET THIS RECORD if you like amazing, amazing, inspiring, heartwarming, transformative art. "I had just convinced myself, like everybody else, that we are somehow beyond this shit." From Germany. KO (Altin Village Records • Louisenstrasse 53 • 01099 Dresden • Germany • altinvillage.de)

POLICE & THIEVES • 7"

A four song 7" that represents this band quite well. There is a lot of revolution summer influence on this record, and I'm definitely hearing EMBRACE and GRAY MATTER meshed with a late 90's-early 2000's youth crew revival sound, most notably in the buildups and vocal delivery. Singer Carlos' voice is certainly not the only similarity to his former band, WORN THIN, and POLICE & THIEVES' sound is a logical progression and maturation from that point. The songs touch on distance, lost friendships, sexual assault, and trying to hold on to things that will only slip away. The only low point of this record is that it doesn't really capture the energy that this band has live. LAL (Higher Conscience Records • higherconsciencecds.com)

THE POPE • Live Aids Free Tibet 7"

If you like putting things in boxes, this goes in the one labeled "two-piece bass-and-drum noise-punk." It mostly reminds me of the SUPPRESSION Burnt Out Receptacles 7", but the songs have slower parts and dancier parts and a lot more noise in between songs. There's some LIGHTNING BOLT stuff going on here and a little KARP. Three songs that are kind of fun and noisy and interesting. FIL (Yosada Records • PO Box 1581 • Boise, ID 83701)

PROJECT HOPELESS • Hit Men Inte Langre... CD

It is down right sickening how punk this is. This release is a collection of all their material recorded between 2001-2004. In a nut shell, PROJECT HOPELESS' sound is full throttle. No, not like the energy, but more like a high speed chase ending with a nose dive off of a cliff. If fast and furious didn't have the connotation that it now has thanks to those hollywood blockbusters, that description would pretty much hit the nail on the head. MT (Bullwhip Records c/o Borhan • No. 9, Jalan 3/4 G • 43650 Bandar Baru Bangi • Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia • geocities.com/bullwhiprecs)

PUNKIN PIE • Broke Truck Good Luck Song CD

One does, upon reflection, find oneself considering the question: which came first, Plan-It-X or the many, many bands that fall within the sonic umbrella of their "sound?" One does, if one were cynical, sometimes ask oneself if any of these bands (much like some bands on, say, the No Idea roster) get together with the words, "Let's start a Plan-It-X type of band" initially tumbling from their lips. Like, they're doing it intentionally, rather than just getting together and being like, "Huh,

so that's what we wound up sounding like. Cool." Tangents aside, PUNKIN PIE remind me a lot of many other bands on this label—raw, smart, passionate and juuuust hanging in tune by the skin of their teeth. When the male/female vocals play off each other it reminds me a lot of ABE FROMAN and when it's just the guy singing (which is the majority of the album) it brings to mind a dirtier, apart-at-the-seams FRAC-TURE. Ultimately it comes down to the fact that PUNKIN PIE is one of those bands that translates pretty well to record (there are some really nice songs on here) but probably shine like fucking halogens when they're sweating and screaming their asses off in a basement show. I liked this one. KR (Plan-It-X Records • PO Box 14001 • Gainesville, FL 32604 • plan-it-x.com)

QUIET STEPS • CD

Three men playing music that sounds like the quieter parts of SAETIA and YOU AND I with haggard vocals. They do it well but it never seems to go anywhere. Lots of build ups into nothing. Pretty good production. Four songs that are about four minutes each. CH (Yellow Ghost • PO Box 281 • Flinders Lane • Victoria 8009 • Australia)

RACCOO-OO-OON • Behold Secret Kingdom CD

This record review requires at least two disclosures: 1) I like these fellows personally and 2) this label kindly released a record by my old band. But fuck it, even if that weren't true I'd still think this record was pretty amazing. Most bands that trade in freaked-out, vaguely mystical, jammed out sounding avant-punk aren't really trying hard enough. RACCOO-OO-OON, however, aren't fucking around. It's really hard to describe what happens on this album concisely or systematically. I sort of feel like NINA SIMONE introducing "Mississippi Goddamn" as "a show tune, but the show hasn't been written yet". Boredom-like extended and oceanic jams crash against the shore with the same mysticism you find in COIL, LUNGFISH, and SUN RA. Chaos gives way to order and order to chaos. Midwestern punk rock accepts that "we are fleeting figures on a temporary landscape" (Daniel Higgs) and runs with the idea. Dawn occurs at the half-way point. I am at something of a loss to describe the beauty of this album, and thus I babble. It sounds like life is: glorious, chaotic, painful, ecstatic. If any of the above doesn't sound like total BS to you you should check it out. Since nothing on this record seems to happen without a reason, I wonder what these guys would achieve if they can write and sing intelligible lyrics to music like this. Maybe they can't. Maybe that's the point. HM (Release the Bats • c/o Matthias Andersson • Nymanegatan 53 • 41508 Göteborg • Sweden)

RADICAL ATTACK • Priority CD

Hey, remember WHN? Well RADICAL ATTACK sure do. There seems to be an overall theme of rage in the lyrics. They come across with a near militance, though at most times it is too vague to understand what their conviction is directed at. This just seems to be another boy's club installment of gang vocals and fast hardcore. MT (Ghost Town Records • Vinyl Addict • 1835 De Bourgogne • Sherbrooke, QC • J1J161 Canada • ghosttownrecords.com)

RAGER • demo CDR

Okay. The cover star of this CDR is Karl Marx photoshopped onto Rambo's body. The back cover features a zombie Jesus with an American flag loincloth with a pentagram on it, saying "Hang In There!". There are songs entitled "It's a Cunt, Not A Country; It's a Frat, Not A Fraternity", "Been Signin' Tits Since '86" and "If I Had To Fuck One Dude, It Would Be The Singer Of Boston" - I was completely ready to be greeted by a completely hackneyed attempt at witty art-hardcore. Thankfully, though, the band lives up to its name and rips through the better part of thirteen minutes of thrash. This demo has the sound of being made by young, energetic kids into music for the sake of fun, which I can get down with. It's kind of like a coconut: It was hard to get past the exterior, but what lay inside was pretty enjoyable. SP (Rager • 2112 N Campbell Apt. 1F • Chicago IL 60647)

THE RATCHETS • Glory Bound CD

Despite the fact that the cover looks like an Abercrombie ad selling leather jackets, I'd go so far as to say that Glory Bound is actually a pretty goddamn decent album. Combining elements of ska, reggae and streetpunk, they've made an album that isn't ferocious by any means, but is laid-back, smart and listenable as hell. It's a great mishmash of Jagged Thoughts-era AMERICAN STEEL, SMALLTOWN and (if not

in stature, than at least in ambition) THE CLASH. I've actually owned this album for some time now and still find myself playing it fairly often. If you're looking for grindcore or something, steer way the hell clear of this one. If you're looking for something that at first listen is awesome background music and, on closer inspection, a damn fine, topical and catchy punk album, give this one a spin. KR (Pirates Press Records • 819 30th Ave. • San Francisco, CA 94121)

THE REACTION/NEVERENDING PARTY • split 7"

I just want to start this off by saying that Wade Driver from THE REACTION has one of my all-time favorite singing voices; whiskey-strained and sickeningly sweet. The music of THE REACTION has a loose, mid-tempo, late 90's Mission District feel to it, not unlike SHOTWELL or the poppier side of 50 MILLION. Even though this 3 piece is really reminiscent of Wade's old bands (more like CORDUROY than 50 MILLION or ATTIC TED), I'm not complaining because he's a consistently great songwriter. I think they could have come up with a stronger release though and I'm really looking forward to what the future holds for this band. Fuck yeah. NEVERENDING PARTY corrals all of your favorite members of BENT OUTTA SHAPE, BOBBY JOE EBOLA AND THE CHILDREN MCNUGGITS, BEFORE THE FALL, and SIX PACK FOUR and puts them all in the same band! For the uninitiated, Corbett's voice will probably throw off the punks, because it's sorta bombastic and over the top...kind of like when you were 13 and heard Jello Biafra sing for the first time. Corbett is a really good singer though...like, he sings on key and shit. It's awesome, actually. The music is straight forward and punk as fuck in the jangly good pop way. This sounds like the perfect band to see at 1 am while drunk and dancing with a basement (living room, walk in closet, etc) full of friends. Entirely recommended. GH (Thrillhouse Records • PO Box 460207 • San Francisco, CA 94146 • thrillhouserecords.com)

RED MARK • demo CDR

When I first saw that this was one guy with a 4 track, I got worried that it was gonna be a bad acoustic project. I was relieved to find out that it was fairly tight personal/political hardcore in the vein of GORILLA BISCUITS and early 7 SECONDS. The recording quality is pretty damn raw (like I can't hear the snare drum sometimes), but I think it works in RED MARK'S favor. The lyrics are based around familiar territory such as community within the punk scene, animal rights, scene politics, and the misuse of third world images as clip art. I think that this guy has his heart in the right place, but, honestly, I would be more excited about it if it was a full band. Maybe I'm just old fashioned, but, hey man...you live in Austin, Texas! There's got to be some people there who want to play in this band with you. Get out in the community and find them! GH (Mark • 1308 Cinco St #265 • Austin, TX 78704 • maggottfarm@hotmail.com)

RINGERS/AMPERE • split 8"

This instantly reminds me of the MOHINDER/NITWITS split with a frantic screamo band on one side and pop punk on the other. Both bands are bringin' it this time; just one song each, but they both leave you wanting more. RINGERS start off with a sweet CLASH-like riff and add LEATHERFACE-esque vocals and a little DILLINGER FOUR and you have a really fucking catchy song. AMPERE, as usual, bust out of the gate all frenzied and chaotic like and then settle into a sweet breakdown that maintains all that momentum, but allows you to catch your breath before plunging back into craziness. Great little package with artwork by Aaron Cometus. FIL (No Idea! • P.O. Box 14636 • Gainesville, FL 32604)

ROBOCOP 3 • If The Door Is Locked... 7"

This is some loud, yet lo-fi, not-givin-a-fuck, blown-out party punk from San Francisco. Ridiculous lyrics about playing Magic cards, living life like the Muppet Movie, and not being invited to a pool party. It has a boom-box-recording feel with muffled guitars and distorted vocals, but it's fun and the drums are fast and hold everything together, barely. FIL (Thrillhouse Records • PO Box 460207 • San Francisco, CA 94146 • thrillhouserecords.com)

ROBOTOSAURUS • Sayra Bahk Volume 1: Last Refuge of the Exiled Man & Volume 2: Triformais CD

Five men playing "sick" tech metal/grind stuff with lyrics apparently all about some alien/robot war fantasy crap. They have two vocalists and GET THIS - one of them sings in a high screechy voice and wait, no no, you don't know what I'm about to say, THE OTHER SINGS IN A DEEP GROWL! Fucking crazy, right? Holy shit! CH (Yellow Ghost Records • PO Box 281 • Flinders Lane • Victoria 8009 • Australia)

ROCK, STAR • Inamorato CD

This record was recorded in 2000 which might make what I'm about to say make more sense. The first song "Love and Crime" sounds a lot like late BIKINI KILL in that The-Jam-meets-X-Ray-Spex way that is so charming. Making major key music sound good and not cheesy is really hard and for that song these guys do a good job. The lyrics about "Friday night/running from the cops" and "getting into fights down at the mall" (and if I'm hearing it right "hopscoth hustling girls" which is a nice one) recall the low-life narratives that LIFTER PULLER's Craig Finn was so expertly busting out around the same time. Indeed something of LIFTER PULLER's knowing mix of contemporary indie styles and 70s and 80s rock vibes is present in the instrumentation here as well. The next couple of songs are exemplary of other trends in DIY music in the late 90s. 'Emo' was moving from 'screamo' to 'moody indie' to pop punk and some pretty interesting things did happen along the way (bands like Cleveland's DIVINE INVASION come to mind,



LAS ADELITAS

Photo BY DAVE SANDERS

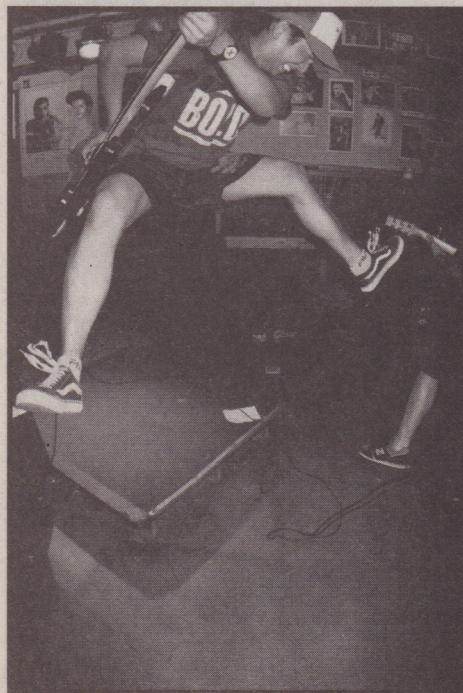
as does that one good RAINER MARIA song "Tim Foil"). These songs have about one third measure of what was interesting about bands that were neither hardcore nor screamo at all but didn't sit comfortably in indie or pop punk categories (obviously I'm being a bit reductive here). The other two-thirds is pretty conservative major chord poppy emo of the sort that got so inexplicably popular over the last ten years. The cover of BIKINI KILL's "Carnival" is interesting. It takes the sham-bolic, feedbacky, disparate squall of the original and turns it into an anthem without any hint of the discomfort behind its excitement. This, at least for me, seems to miss the point. Still that first track is well worth checking out. HM (theblacknumbers.com)

RUINER • Prepare To Be Let Down LP

Fast melodic modern hardcore that is reminiscent of bands like ANOTHER BREATH and COMEBACK KID. There is some epicness to these songs, a la MODERN LIFE IS WAR, but played a lot faster than many bands of this genre. This was recorded at The Outpost by Jim Siegel, so that should give people an idea of what this sounds like, similar to his other recordings of GUNS UP!, HAVE HEART, and DOWN TO NOTHING. I can see a lot of people liking this record, although not a genre I get really stoked on. I do like the speed this has, which makes it a bit different from its contemporaries, because it gives it that frenzied sound with a hint of punk. The vocals are good, while the lyrics come across as whiny, and too high school drama. There is something about this I couldn't quite, well, believe in. On top of that, the art-work is that really boring cartoon-y style that became popular a few years ago that I think is really terrible...people hanging from a tree with birds flying past a red moon, and a broken swing-set. I'm sorry but it just seems contrived. Again, I like this in small doses, but more importantly, I can see this being a meaningful record for other people. GH. (Bridge Nine Records • Bridge9.com)

SAME-SEX DICTATOR • CD

I really tried to like this, but SAME-SEX DICTATOR only did it for me about thirty percent of the time. Mathy, noisy, occasionally melodic hardcore (Jesus, how many times have I written that before?) with huge, reverb-soaked drum breakdowns and lots of distant, scratchy scratchy guitar texture. Vocals overlay gravelly BORN AGAINST shouting and deep hardcore growls. The more traditionally structured songs are too predictably obtuse for my tastes, but I really enjoyed the droning, moody soundscapes, especially near the end of "Tim Roth..." and "At the End of the Cold War". In these passages, individual instruments/amplifiers finally have room to breathe and the cacophony of hissing, buzzing guitars and funereal drums is much more profound and engaging. Sort of abstract-deep-space-operatic, but abrasive and ominous in a way that diverges from the style of other epic-cosmological-breakdown bands. If it was up to me I'd cut out the apocalyptic vocals and the obligatory hardcore climaxes and splice the hypnotic



dissonance that ties it all together into a twenty minute dark-matter-epic. BL (Justin Straw • 2020 S. Nye Pl. • Seattle, WA 98144 • flophaus@hotmail.com)

SAMOTHRACE • demo CDR

SAMOTHRACE hails from Lawrence "Fucking" Kansas, has members of OROKU, and plays sludgy, melodic metal. This demo has three songs. The three songs are solid enough and comparable to though not as catchy or shockingly danceable as genre hotties GRAVES AT SEA. I hear that everything doesn't have to be a contest, but GRAVES AT SEA wins again lyrically with, among many other eloquently grim topics, menstruation! SAMOTHRACE lyrics wearily give voice to the kind of imagery sludge obviously evokes (floods, storms, blood that isn't specifically uterine-lining infused). I leave you with this final image: when I saw SAMOTHRACE at CLITfest in Richmond, the onstage fan was blowing their hair around while they played. Dude. BECK (samothracedoom@yahoo.com)

SEASICK • Awakenings 10"

This is a solid, catchy record with sensibilities from all over the spectrum of punk and hardcore. The first song kicks in with feedback and pounding drums that quickly give way to a driving fast part, with some rock and roll esque solos thrown in. I'm not really feeling the solos, but then I'm hit with an interesting breakdown (no E chugs!) and much more suitable Melnick-era INTEGRITY guitar noodling, which is always fine by me. The second song is played at a more breakneck pace, which brings to mind a slightly less melodic KID DYNAMITE. The second side is more of the same, closed out by an instrumental, which does not always work well for a hardcore record, but it's tasteful and caps the record off nicely. 10"s are my favorite format, because they are long enough to really get a feel for what the band is doing, but always leave me wanting more. As a final note, the lyrics on the record are a refreshing change of pace from the detached, apolitical nature of a lot of punk these days. Themes include; anarchism, religion and animal rights, but the songs have a very personal tone and don't come off as issue based. This record has been a regular on my turntable for a few weeks now. LAL (BrainDrain Records • 5006 Judson Dr. • Bensalem, PA 19020)

SELF ABUSE • Lawnmower Parts 7"

Dark, alcohol-fueled self hatred. I feel like I'm being spit on when I listen to this record. Five songs of low life, guttural hardcore musing on suicide, spending every night alone in one's room getting drunk, fighting for no reason, and looking back on a wasted life ("Don't tell me how the good times were, I'm not sure that there were any. I don't know what I want from life, I'm stumbling blind."). This record picks right up where vocalist Matt's former band, THE AFTERMATH, left off. I can't decide if I like this, hate this, or feel shitty about myself for liking it. Normally I would say something about how promoting this sort of shit if you don't live it is fucked up and irresponsible, but this record comes off as quite sincere. That's the depressing part. LAL (Higher Conscience Records • higherconsciencerecords.com)

SENATA FOX • The Acraey Discourse CD

This is the best thing I have heard all year. SF keep it real and just play their own brand of punk/hardcore fast and dirty, avoiding boring descriptions like "d-beat" or "throw back". The artwork on this digipak discography is like a Nick Blinko sketch put to the third power, morbid, and with a particular attention to detail. Get ahold of this cd anyway you can! MT (Moonlee Records • Pot na Breg 8 525 • Solkan, Slovenia • moonleerecords.com)

SENTAI • Full Representation CD

Based on previous impressions and the paper and glue stick packaging, I wasn't expecting a lot here, but SENTAI actually brought it on! For anyone who has been waiting for a cool new ex-BLACK EYES punk band, this might be what you've been waiting for. SENTAI started out as a spazzy video game inspired Q AND NOT U style indie rock band, but a couple of years ago Hugh McElroy (BLACK EYES) joined up with them, and now they're treading the space in between Japanese style keyboard punk and dubby FUGAZI bass grooves. "Full Representation" fluctuates consistently between those extremes. Anytime the record starts slowing down you can expect the next song will be an abrupt shot of hyperactivity and vice versa. They pull off the slower numbers more coherently and one of the high points of the album is

when it breaks down to banjo, bass and drum machine for a quiet interlude. The absence of a lyrics sheet really hurts, because from what I can understand they seem to have a fairly intelligent critique going. The album has a cohesive protest theme, epitomized in the epic closing track "Signed DC," an anthem for DC statehood that ends with a chant of "Full representation now! We're fired up! We won't take no more!" It seems like tragically few punk bands these days are fired up, and I could count on my fingers the ones who won't take no more. Welcome to the list, SENTAI. GT (Ruffian Records • PO Box 5522 • Washington, DC 20016 • ruffianrecords.com)

SHIT MAYOR • Fuck Whole Foods Shit Cassingle tape

"Fuck whole foods and fuck American apparel!" is chanted over and over on this "shit cassingle". This is a two song cassette of synthesizer dance music. Something I will never listen to again. If you like good jokes you probably won't like this tape. If joke synthesizer music is your thing then definitely run and pick this up. MM (M. Siciliano • 4913 Cypress Street • Pittsburgh, PA 15224)

SHIT MAYOR • Mixtape Volume 1 tape

A collection of field recordings, forgettable low-fi grunge songs, and bizarre noise compositions consume this 23-stop landscape vista of obscurity. It's a tough listen, no doubt, but to realize that someone took the time to make this is curiously fascinating. To think, "Tittmayor is a Clit" and "\$OUTH\$\$1d3 J3RK\$" are actual songs now. MMC (M. Siciliano • 4913 Cypress Street • Pittsburgh, PA 15224)

SHOREBIRDS • 7"

Somewhere between melodic punk and pop punk, this reminds me of the pre-RINGERS band SIRENS (or sometimes THE INSURGENT) and a little bit of YO MAN, GO! and maybe a cleaner PUNKIN PIE. Or like one of those bands covering "Bastards of Young". It's catchy and head-bobbing and includes the lyrics: "can't live with the people that I live with / can't work with the people that I work with / some people say I just got an attitude / some people say I'm just hard to deal with / I just try to survive." I imagine some of you may be able to relate. FIL (Shorebirds • 315 Steele St. NE • Olympia, WA 98506)

SHORTLIVED • demo CDR

Two men play a five-piece band's worth of fastcore on this demo, with one taking drums and vocals while the other does guitar, bass and vocals. The fellow playing the drums seems quite adept at doing so, which is so necessary for music like this. This shit is punk! No metal or guttural growling here. Both dudes sing and I like their voices; they are of the tortured punk variety, sounding nice and desperate. Some of the songs reveal a dose of mid-tempo melody that I also like. Think RUDIMENTARY PENI and HIS HERO IS GONE played mostly at DEEP WOUND speed. Yeah, awesome. They keep things short, with the longest song one minute and eight seconds long. They have some two-step parts here and there, making sure that these eight songs don't become monotonous. Lyrically, SHORTLIVED documents the alienation and frustration of modern life, railing against religion, the emptiness of consumer culture and men who express their insecurities through macho behavior. There is also a smattering of personal stuff, including a song expressing insecurity about choosing to consume alcohol. What it comes down to is that I want more and hope that they are a real band, not just off for a fun recording. Not that I would likely ever see them, as they are from New Zealand, but more recordings would be nice. This demo rules. CH (Stunsmas@yahoo.co.nz)

THE SHOW IS A RAINBOW • 7"

This is kind of lounge-y electro art-punk dance music. It kind of sounds like a cross between BECK, ATOM & HIS PACKAGE, and MC 900 FT JESUS. When they say "one-man band" I think they mean the weirdo singing to the laptop. That's a genre now. FIL (Yosada Records • PO Box 1581 • Boise, ID 83701)

SIGNS OF HOPE • First and Foremost 7"

I thought this was a joke when I read the lyrics, but after listening, I guess not. The music and delivery are not funny enough in the "this is meant to be funny" kind of way. Five men (who else?) playing some of the most generic youth crew rehash I have ever heard. Breakdown after fast part after gang vocals after breakdown. The music is pretty standard, but the lyrics, fuck. Three out of the nine songs on this record are about hardcore-like going to shows and moshing and shit. The rest are

cookie cutter "personal" songs about how important it is to be yourself, have pride and never change. Wow. CH (Goodwill Records)

SILBATO/CEASE UPON THE CAPITOL • Split 3" CD

Maybe I'm behind the times, but I do not have a CD player that can play a 3" CD, so, I was forced to turn to the internet to review this. Both bands play a familiar style of emotional hardcore that saturated pretty much every show I went to between 2001 and 2005. That being said, both bands are quite good at what they do, it's just hard for me to feel excited by new bands playing this style of music these days. The lyrics are vague and lack the poignancy that causes me to cherish so many older releases in this style. If you are into the newer bands playing this style, CEASE UPON THE CAPITOL definitely play it well, I just wish they documented it in a playable format. LAL (Shove Records • via Don Minzoni n.3 • 15100 Alessandria • Italy • shoverecords.com)

SL-27 • 7"

SL-27 are a chaotic, spastic hardcore band from Belgium with mostly indecipherable vocals that remind me of GUYANA PUNCHLINE. There are melodic parts and hurried clean-tone parts with screaming over them and then there are wild blastbeat-freakout parts. The drab and unsettling cover art seems an odd choice for a record with songs like "Dude You're Sooo Black Metal." FIL (Mashnote Records • Asstraat 4/2 • 2400 Mol • Belgium • mashnote.net)

SOME MONESTERY • Welcome to the Symmetry CD

This is apparently the 16th or so release in the last 7 years from Baltimore's Brad Walker. This is light and moody indie rock, admittedly inspired by THURSTON MOORE's guitar style. Vocally, it's somewhere between STEPHEN MALKMUS and early BECK. The record is consistent, mid tempo throughout, but never really picks it up to a pace or energy that engages me. Certainly not bad, but not something I'll be telling my friends about. GT (Brad Walker • 201 Massachusetts Ave. • Cumberland, MD 21502)

SUPREME COMMANDER/ALIVE AT LAST • split CD

The one sheet that came with this included this ridiculous narrative about how SUPREME COMMANDER rose up from the rubble of a DC punk scene overrun by white belted hipsters in need of a new punk savior. I think it's pretty exemplary of a rift in perception that exists between the street punk scene in DC and the kind of punk that I've been exposed to here. With that said, I feel I can say authoritatively as a "hipster" (no white belt, sorry) that this is a decent record. Despite the over the top introduction, SUPREME COMMANDER plays some decent, if straight forward, SICK OF IT ALL style punk with strong youth crew leanings (they cover THE GORILLA BISCUITS' "New Direction"). New Jersey's ALIVE AT LAST don't deviate too far stylistically, but their riffs are moshier and their sound is heavier. If you're into fast punk or old school hardcore, this record should get you circle pitting around your room. GT (Bishop19 Records • 1218 Treasure Ave • Manahawkin, NJ 08050)

THANK GOD/TIGERSHARK • split 10"

TIGERSHARK reside in my hometown of Richmond, Virginia where bands are consistently forming, disbanding, and recombining, so it's nice to see some recorded documentation of the great music that often only falls on the ears of that town's residents. TIGERSHARK play melodic, but still abrasive, hardcore that clearly references great Canadian bands like DRIFT and URANUS. There is a decidedly southern edge to the music, though, and it captures the hazy, humid feeling of waking up late in a summer afternoon listening to SLINT. If you are a fan with the work of THANK GOD's predecessors, GUYANA PUNCHLINE, their side of this record will probably suit you nicely. I like the pounding, ritual feel to the parts that aren't off time, though the singers warbling clean vocals come of slightly more art school than Shamanistic. The group vocals on the final song have a hypnotic quality that complements TIGERSHARK's meandering final offer quite well. LAL (Perpetual Motion Machine • Mol Sook Records • PO Box 14704 • Richmond, VA 23221 • theperpetualmotionmachine.com)

TIN ARMOR • A Better Place Than I Have Been CD

Some people, apparently, really do want to fill the world with silly love songs, or love-angst songs at any rate. TIN ARMOR have been compared to TED LEO AND THE PHARMACISTS, which I can definitely see. There are fast, propulsive drums, well-ordered and catchy

chord progressions, and melodic vocals all over this record. But TIN ARMOR lacks LEO's sense of poetry and his conviction, as well as his band's ability to switch things up dynamically. Occasionally good lyrics crop up, such as "She says 'it's more about getting caught then [sic] it is about getting off'", which hint at the wry sensibility of lyricists like LIFTER PULLER's Craig Finn or even MORRISSEY (two people I don't often think about in the same minute). That said, when MORRISSEY sang anything as maudlin as "But what have I become, I'm 21/ and still afraid of love" (TIN ARMOR, not the Moz), it was with his tongue at least half in his cheek. TIN ARMOR earnestness is unlearned on this record which makes its early 20s angst depressing rather than redeeming. Once again, however, the sleeve art is lovely. HM (One Percent Press • PO Box 315 • Wilder, VT 05088)

TOM LOMACCHIO • Deadwood Divine LP

One of the reasons I love Altin Village Records, based in Germany, so much is that owner Marcel Schulz's taste and stamp are really, really apparent on the releases he puts out. I myself have worked on projects with him to put out vinyl of releases that have already been out on CD - however I was surprised to see that the label released TOM LOMACCHIO's LP, recorded smack dab in the middle of the nineties. The music is urgent, weighty, and sad. I would say it reminds me of ELLIOTT SMITH but I think ELLIOTT SMITH has a great deal more strength vocally. The lyrics are haunting, but I don't like the melodies on a couple of the songs - I don't think they are as deliberate as they could be, and it irks me because these lyrics and the guitar are arching and intense and poignant. I want him to tighten up the vocal delivery! There is a rabbit on the matrix artwork that reminded me of Watership Down. I definitely appreciate Altin Village's commitment to its vision and preservation of music meaningful to so many, both past and present. KO (Altin Village Records • Louisenstrasse 53 • 01099 Dresden • Germany • altinvillage.de)

TONIGHT WE RIDE • demo CDR

"Bro's, thankfully the four of us hate everyone in the human race except for each other. Aren't you sick of Hardcore? It's time we put out a CDR. Nobody's writing lyrics that rhyme anymore! Let's take it upon ourselves to write a ton of songs about all the things that make us mad so the world knows we aren't fucking around. Then when we're cozily judging civilization from our high horse, we can play a bunch of bad breakdowns riffs for them so they can all kill each other." MMc (413 Holcomb Ave. • Reno, NV 84501)

TO THE NORTH • Landscapes CD

Loose, but highly structured songs with fusion-jazzy and slightly metal flourishes. Instrumentally, I dig the alternation of loose drumming with anchoring 4/4 beats with a little swing. The bass seems to provide another anchor for a guitar that emerges out of minor-chord figures to attempt almost hopelessly busy single-string runs. This record is pretty interesting in the moments created by the tension between cohesion and collapse. It's also pretty nice that the musicians audibly don't pull off playing their parts. I enjoy hearing a farty bass mis-fret or off time drums and guitars now and then. The vocals are of a spoken/shouted type that seem a bit lackluster sometimes but occasionally hint at the sort of affectless that Mark E. Smith or the RED MONKEY folks pull off. It makes it hard to feel the abandon suggested by lyrics like "there is no tomorrow tonight so dance with me". The album isn't without interesting moments and the sleeve art is lovely. HM (Yellow Ghost Records • PO Box 281 • Flinders Ln • Victoria 8009 • Australia)

TUBERS • Shell Out CD

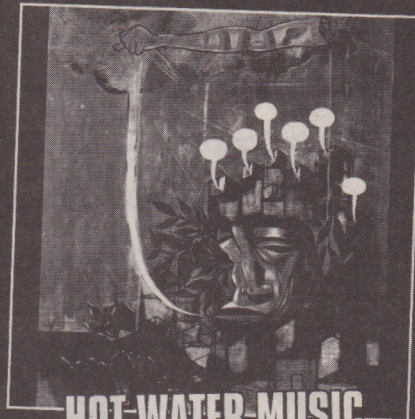
I really love the second song on this cd, "The Other Half." It is melodic and driving, with great drumming and energy. Rich Diem of TWELVE HOUR TURN is a member of this band, and put it out on his label Bakery Outlet, a favorite of mine based in Florida. Songs are incredibly energetic and alive-sounding. There is some really neat stitching on the back of this cd - three horses and a flower. These pop songs remind me of TED LEO in their intensity and fervor. Vocal duties are shared, and complement each other well. Everything about this release is intimate and carefully constructed, giving the listener the sense that it is worth holding onto. I appreciate the way this was written, made and distributed. Great band!!!! KO (Bakery Outlet Records • P.O. Box 4054 • St. Augustine, FL 32085 • bakeryoutletrecords.com)

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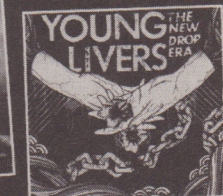
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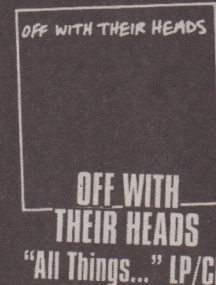
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THE TWO YEAR CURSE + JOSEPH ANDREOLI • EP CDR

Long 12:26 and 18:22 minute freeform jams featuring drum machine, effects, guitar, microphone, and electronics. The first track, "Jazzboner", is a plodding, improvised exercise in knob-twiddling with effects pedals reminiscent of some of Aaron Dilloway from WOLF EYES' solo work. Track two maintains a kind of rhythm through the echoes of sound sources processed through delay pedals, with swells of distorted guitar cresting and troughing across it. This kind of music, though undeniably fun to make, doesn't seem terribly compelling to me lately, even though it's not unpleasant to listen to. It relies to a certain extent on randomness ("what happens if I turn this knob here while I drum my fingers on the neck of my guitar like so?") which makes it lack intention. The randomness does make it "experimental" but to pretend that experimental music of this sort is avant-garde any more is bordering on the delusional. It's been done practically to death. If you take the chaotic elements from RACCOO-OO-ON's "Behold Secret Kingdom" and jettison the structure against which they become interesting, you're left with something like this. It's not unpleasant, but only for fans of the genre. HM (Blast Beats for Freedom • 41 Grandview Street #1405 • Santa Cruz, CA 95060)

MMM • Not for Distribution to the Public 7"

By the books power violence. Lyrics read like less clever CHARLES BRONSON. Singer sounds like MARK MCCOY with less energy. They reference violence in both their email and mspace addresses. The sides of the record are named after pop-alternative authors and they play from the inside out. Edgy? LAL (ummmviolence@hotmail.com)

UNDER PRESSURE • Come Clean CD

I like the name of this band. I'm curious if they got their name from the 1981 song by QUEEN and DAVID BOWIE. This band comes from Winnipeg, Canada and I believe this is their third full length. This CD contains a very diverse set of ten songs. The CD starts off with "Come Clean" a pretty catchy track with a lot of MOTORHEAD and POISON IDEA influence. Track six of the cd, "The Crawl" starts off with a surprising piano intro feeding into a really melodic and driving riff with vocals overlaid in a similar style to FUCKED UP. These tracks are heavily melodic and very catchy. These recordings didn't blow me away but they also didn't leave me uninterested. I'd be curious to see what this band is like live. MM (Escape Artist Records • PO Box 472 • Downingtown, PA 19335)

VANESSA VAN BASTEN • LP

Like some foreign and illegible soft drink you hesitate to sip, everything about this warns of something odorous and offensive. For me, if it isn't visually arresting I know that no matter what it sounds like, it's going to suck. Take the inept print job of the cover art or the squirrelly looking band members with pony tails and goatee's and tell ME if this description sounds enticing: slow, moody multi guitar effect-pedals-gone-haywire, with no vocals or direction, littered with occasional METALLICA riffs and inaudible sound bites in Italian. Like there's even a store in existence that I could sell this back to. MMc (KNVBI • 53 Menlena Circle • Hanover, PA 17331)

VICIOUS CYCLE • I'm Watching You 7"

Snotty 80's style hardcore punk from Sudbury, Ontario. All the songs have the same fast-tempo and good vocals, snotty and angry yelling. There are some wild guitar jangle-y parts that make the songs more interesting. This has a nice, clear recording and I heard that the next record might come out on DERANGED RECORDS, so it's not at all out of place with other bands on DERANGED like ETA, and TERMINAL STATE. The layout is simple and clean - I like it. Great record to come out of the Canadian Shield, keep it coming! GH (Vinyl Addict • 1835 De Bourgogne • Sherbrooke QC • J1J 1B1 • Canada • ghost-townrecords.com)

VUNENY • V2 CD

I had a really hard time reviewing this album. This CD came with press release talking about how this band plays "indie experimental music." This band is from Bosnia. I don't know if this is "indie experimental music" in Bosnia, but to me it sounded rather boring and unimpressive. They have a kind of pop sensibility that is comparable to a smaller

American mainstream band. Boring delayed guitars, synth swells, and mid-temp drums pretty much sums up this album. GF (Moonlee Records • Pot na Breg 8 525 • Solkan, Slovenia • moonleerecords.com)

VUUR • Vuurviolence CD

Violence. Yep, this is the audio accomplice to physical violence. Deep destructive tones and intricate melody and rhythms wind in and out of music and noise. The only complaint I had is that throughout all this chaos, I was not expecting all of the instruments to drop out only to hear a whimper in the vocals. That happens infrequently and then very suddenly returns to the mayhem already in progress. MT (Shove Records • Via Don Minzoni n.3 • 15100 Alessandria • Italy • shov-erecords.com)

WORLD/ INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY •

Addicted to Bad Ideas: Peter Lorre's Twentieth Century CD

Ah, WORLD/ INFERNO. I've never been disappointed. If you're unfamiliar with the New York 10 piece cabaret-punk-soul orchestra, I suggest you start by seeing their spectacular live show. If you can't wait for them to come to town, check this out. "Addicted to Bad Ideas" is supposedly a concept album about the life and times of actor Peter Lorre and it is complete with a fully orchestrated overture at the beginning. I'd like to imagine that there's a loose narrative stringing these songs together, but without any explanation it's hard to understand just exactly how this is different from any other WORLD/ INFERNO record. With that said, it's a terrific journey into depravity and the freedom that comes with paving your own road even when it means giving up everything. What WORLD/INFERNO does perfectly is conjure the punk as fuck attitude of such untraditional influences as CAB CALLOWAY or DEXY'S MIDNIGHT RUNNERS without screwing things up by trying to sound like a punk rock band. Fans might be dismayed that of the 10 songs, 3 are re-recordings, but the 7 new songs more than pull their weight. GT (Chunksaah Records • P.O.Box 977 • Asbury Park, NJ 07712 • chunksaah.com)

WRITTEN FROM NEGATIVE • Almost Always... CD

This band is reminiscent of Q AND NOT U and RAHIM. Dancy, quirky indie pop. I wish there was a bit more low end on the recording - the songs are strong but some parts sound a bit tinny. The vocals are strong and remind me of Australia's MY DISCO. Some of the percussion sounds were neat - tambourines, shakers, a full palate. A couple of the songs could have been shorter in my opinion and accomplish the same thing musically. All in all, a worthwhile record. KO (The Company with the Golden Arm • tcwtga.org)

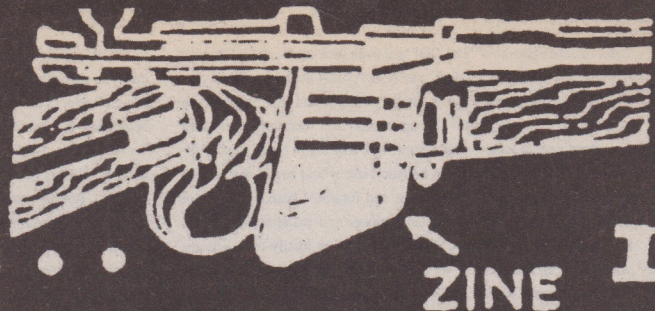
YO MAN, GO • 7"

Super high-energy super-posi emo for the 2000s. The first side is like a punkier version of early GET UP KIDS while the second side is more like late-era LIFETIME or early SAVES THE DAY and it ends in an epic "whoa-oh-oh" part that's kind of a tear jerker. So, are they leading a fight to bring integrity and DIY back to emo or are they just "paying their dues" before hitting it big on the skateboard-sneaker circuit? Only time will tell, but worst case scenario, they can be another classic case of "that first 7" rules! Everything else sucks!" FIL (Square of Opposition • 2935 Fairview St. • Bethlehem, PA 18020)

ZOOKEEPER • Trumpets b/w Snow in Berlin 7"

The design of this seven inch's artwork screamed mid-nineties at me (think Gloria Record - not a bad thing for a girl who cut her teeth going to see SARGE and MINERAL and COMPOUND RED), and the music was along the lines I expected. Of a high quality, I must say. I have yet to be disappointed by an Altin Village release. The song "Trumpets" featured horns, acoustic guitar, piano and more - all tastefully arranged. Chris Simpson's voice really sells this, and if you are a fan of BRIGHT EYES, MINERAL, THE GOOD LIFE, et al, you would do well to pick this up immediately. Recorded in 2006 in Austin, Texas at a place called the Bubble. Snow in Berlin is a bit dancier, soulful - god, as I sit here and listen more and more, I am thinking to myself that this is the best score of a seven inch I have gotten in a while. No joke. Maybe I belong in the nineties for that. But maybe, just maybe, the celebration in his voice on this second side denotes a new era. KO (Altin Village Records • Louisenstrasse 53 • 01099 Dresden • Germany • altinville.de)

book and



reviews:

A BEAT OF OUR OWN... #2 • 8.5x11 • 40pgs • \$2US/\$5World

This is a punk newsprint zine with lots of sloppy cut-and-paste layout and interviews with people about their old punk bands. This issue features interviews with members of THE HATED, THE AVENGERS, A.P.P.L.E., THE MAGGOTS, CH3, SOCIAL UNREST, and THOUGHT CRIME. The sloppy punk layout is sometimes hard to follow and/or read, but I have fun trying to figure it out. Short interviews with classic punk bands and lots of old pictures and flyers; perfect for your punk-house bathroom. FIL (A Beat of Our Own • 123 B Park Ave • Raleigh, NC 27605)

BIPEDAL, BY PEDAL!

This zine is part retrospective, part manifesto, and part cycling narrative. As someone who has made my living and spent a lot of my time on a bike or around bikes for quite a while, I have always been somewhat wary of Critical Mass and its proponents, but was pleasantly surprised by this zine. The history of Critical Mass, and its evolution from an informal group ride to the phenomenon that it is today is extensive and interesting, and there is a collection of past and current Mass fliers that reflects the differing manifestations of the same idea in many locales. I really appreciate the ability that the authors show to be self-critical and really analyze the positive and negative aspects of various Masses throughout the world. I would recommend this zine to anyone who is in proximity to urban cycling culture and has positive or critical feelings towards Critical Mass in general. LAL (Microcosm • 222 S Rogers St. • Bloomington, IN 47404 • microcosmpublishing.com)

CHUMPIRE #198 • 8.5x11 • 1pg • 1stamp

Record reviews, live show reviews and short anecdotes strung together by a loose narrative, a unique format that makes sure you read reviews you otherwise might have skipped. The paper stock is cool as hell, but nigh fucking impossible to read. WC (M. Siciliano • 4913 Cypress St. • Pittsburgh, PA 15224)

THE CLAIM #1 • 8.5x5.5 • 20pgs • \$1

This is a zine for and about the Worcester HC scene. It mostly consists of little one-page descriptions of local bands: SOUL CONTROL, I RISE, COMMIT, NO MORE, and SCATTER BRAINED. I found the writing amusing, but I hate to say that it seemed unintentionally humorous to me—mostly due to the vagueness of the descriptions. Here's my favorite example: "One thing that makes SOUL CONTROL what they are is the individual contributions that are made by each member and the way they influence the writing process of their music." I like that there's a list of upcoming shows in the back, but I hate how EVERY band description ends with the editor urging readers to just go to their myspace page. WTF? There are few things in zine world as depressing as one that relentlessly nags you to go check out a website. In fact this zine seems to be more influenced by that website than by any other actual zines. Fil (Tonio Almeida • PO Box 111 • West Boylston, MA 01583)

CONSTANT RIDER OMNIBUS • 8.5x 5.5 • Paperback

The Constant Rider Omnibus by Kate Lopresti is a travel zine minus the destinations (well, mostly). Each of the seven issues contained in the omnibus (spanning 2000 - 2005) focuses on a specific topic or trip. A good portion of the zines relish in the mundane bureaucracy and predictable absurdity experienced as a thrifty traveler in the local, national and international domains. It's also a great jump start of your own memories of long bus station layovers, drunk people on the metro, and the occasional friendly fellow traveler. WC (Microcosm • 222 S Rogers St. • Bloomington, IN 47404 • microcosmpublishing.com)

COPPERBONES #2 • 5.5x4.25 • 20pgs

COPPERBONES is one of those personal zines that makes me feel slightly uncomfortable in a voyeuristic way as I read it. I appreciate

the courage it takes to write about one's life, even when not writing about what would be considered traumatic situations by most. The writing in this zine is quite good, and I feel a lot of the imagery that seems to be projected. There are personal anecdotes about childhood, traveling, and hometowns that all resonate in a peculiar way. This is all complemented by black and white line artwork that looks as if it could be etched and fits with the overall presentation of the zine quite well. Finally, the sad nostalgia with which the author acknowledges the past and the XXX that replaces a name at the end drive that resonance home. Highly recommended. LAL (PO Box 85 • Portland, ME 04112 • goonkid@hotmail.com)

DISTANCE MAKES THE HEART GROW SICK

• By Cristy C. Road

This is a book of postcards from illustrations by Cristy Road. It's a cool idea and it works. The postcards themselves aren't much heavier than normal paper and I kind of wish they were thicker instead of having so many, but it's still really cool. If you're not totally familiar with her illustrations, she has a bold and unique style that is unmistakable and usually depicts subjects that fit into the general category of wild-asses. You've undoubtedly seen them, as she is easily one of the most prolific punk artists around right now. And many of those posters, record covers and magazine covers are in this book as well. FIL (Microcosm • 222 S Rogers St. • Bloomington, IN 47404 • microcosmpublishing.com)

DO-IT-YOURSELF SCREENPRINTING • By John Isaacson

Historically I have been skeptical of how well you can learn to screen print without someone showing you how to do it. However, I found this guide, written by John Isaacson, to be very comprehensive. It covers everything you need to set up your own DIY at home screenprinting studio and goes far beyond that. The only thing I found lacking in this book were one page summaries of text so that you could quickly reference the book while in the midst of screen printing without having to search through or touch the book with most likely wet or goopy hands. That being said this is the hands down best manual I've encountered so far. If you don't have someone who can walk you through the process this is your best bet. WC (Microcosm • 222 S Rogers St. • Bloomington, IN 47404 • microcosmpublishing.com)

EMERGE AND SEE UNITY #2 • 5.5x8.5 • 44pgs • \$1

The layout's rough—visually aided by clip art, poorly-scanned images of "trippy" patterns and contributor-submitted ink drawings of, yeah, more patterns. The writing toes the line between the personal and attempting to tackle/discuss issues within a broad political spectrum. There's a section where the guy talks, at length and in great detail, about the books he's been reading—to his credit, he's obviously a bright person. The best part of EASU was the first section, where he writes about his initial restlessness as a kid, how he found punk and was able to use that as a kind of launchpad to explore paganism and a spiritual life. On one hand, there are passages where the guy's words really sing. Unfortunately, they're couched in between a lot of filler pages. If he worked on tightening up the layout and editing himself a bit more stringently, we'd probably be onto something. KR (Dakota Phoenix • PO Box 271 • Bausman, PA 17504)

THE FURY #16 • 5.5x4.25 • 52pgs • \$2

A collection of extremely jaded essays, short stories, and record reviews. Covering topics like the simple revolution of early rock and roll to the hypocrisy experienced living with upper middle class self-identified anarchists. Great read, didn't skip a page. WC (Mark Novotny • 5413 Sixth Ave. • Countryside, IL 60525 • thefuryzine@hotmail.com)

IF DEATH COMES #5 • 5.5 x 4.25 • 20pgs • 50¢ or trade

I think this can all be summed up by the final quote: "We drift. It's what we do"—unknown. That kind of says it all. Floating through space

without direction, not stopping to ask why, but just accepting that "it's what we do". This is a collection of brief journal entries that are somehow both obtuse and filled with mundane details. We find out what he ate at the bus station, but not where he's going or why. Twelve entries from at least a year ago that don't exactly follow a linear timeline. They vaguely describe a winter of wandering aimlessly amidst a period of post-break-up depression. What if instead of just printing the journal entries, you used them to reflect on what was going on and then wrote about that. Maybe that's not the point. As he says himself: "I can write in the dark, and I'm saying nothing. Always saying nothing..." FIL (Sharpie Fumes Collective • PO Box 31224 • Halifax, NS • B3K 5Y1 • Canada)

I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH YOU HATE ME • 8.5 x 5.5

Tour diaries usually make me cringe. The exceptions are typically either so short and sweet that they leave out all the bullshit, or they chronicle a complete disaster. This has both of those elements. It all starts with THE CARS THE DOORS (from California) and a CASANOVA FRANKENSTEIN (from France) meeting in NY to buy a van that none of them have seen. It's a testament to the writing that while reading this on the bus I missed my stop by ten blocks. FIL

INVINCIBLE SUMMER • An Anthology By Nicole J. Georges

This might be the best looking book Microcosm has put out. The cover is really simple and on matte paper and it's just really nice to pick up and flip through. This book compiles the first eight issues of this Portland based zine that's basically a heavily illustrated journal. The layout and illustrations are warm and lovely. And the writing is open and candid like a letter from a dear and distant penpal. Highly Recommended. FIL (Microcosm • 222 S. Rogers St. • Bloomington, IN 47404)

KEEP LOVING, KEEP FIGHTING/ I HATE THIS PART OF TEXAS #7

This is an incredibly moving zine chronicling two peoples' experiences rebuilding and coping with life in a post-Katrina New Orleans. Hope & John chronicle this somber, chaotic year-and-a-half with such inspiring strength & honesty that truly needs to be read to be done any justice. They come to terms with the trauma in different ways, each working towards making sense and picking up the pieces of everyday life. Their stories are underscored with a sense of love and determination, even when faced with frustration, anger, and hopelessness. This should be essential reading. SP (Hope & John • PO Box 791639 • New Orleans, LA 70179)

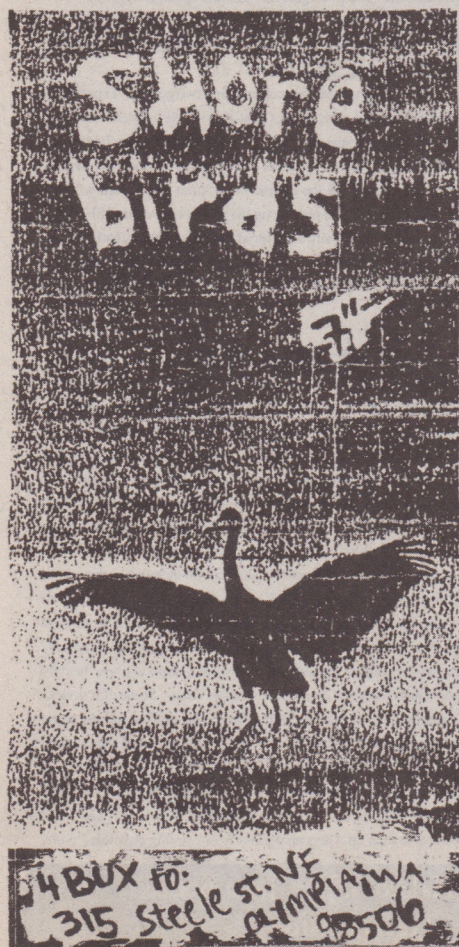
LA FRONTERA: THE BORDER • 4.25x 5.5 • 56pgs

Short, small photocopied zine about a white woman named Melissa's experience traveling to the Mexican/American border three times over two years. At least once, she volunteered with "a radical organization" that provides aid to those attempting to cross into America as well as those who have been returned or repelled from doing so. I found some of the content enlightening, as I have no first-hand experience of what happens at the border or what life is like for those trying to cross it. This is where she was at her most successful—simply detailing what sorts of provisions people are able to bring with them when they try to cross, what hazards they face, how long it takes, etc. Overall, the content is disjointed and generally changes topics and moods from page to page. She speaks of herself often, such as her car getting repeatedly broken into as well as the guilt she feels upon realizing how heavily dependent her lifestyle is on migrant workers' labor. Some of it smacks of self-importance, such as declaring that if she shall be judged unpatriotic because she "won't stand for" the exploitation and degradation of Latin-American migrant workers, then "so be it!" Clearly, Melissa is a liberal who is in the process of being radicalized. In a list of reasons (reasons for what is not clear), she states that "The G.O.P. can't find anyone else to pick on. Gays aren't nearly as exciting anymore." Sure.

BL = Bryan Lyin, CH=Chris Hayes, HM = Hugh McElroy, GH= Gabriela Halasova, JB = Julia Booze,

LAL= Lee Acosta-Lewis, KO = Katy Otto, MT= Mikey T, TF= Travis Fristoe

Please send books and zines to: PO Box 73691 Washington, DC 20056



Later on, she states that "The GOP and even fucking Democrat cronies can shut the hell up." Evidently, she believes that the two political parties in this country are fundamentally different and that one of them is generally responsible for the oppression and discrimination Latin American people face. I would argue that looking at history, and pulling back for a somewhat more holistic view would reveal that in fact what these people are facing is first and foremost based on Western European drives for conquest, land, power and material wealth and the virulent racism that they fostered in order to justify their actions, which have all led to where we are today, rule by an economic system. Industrial capitalism rules this world and dictates that cheap labor is needed to feed it and that those workers must remain divided from other workers by any means available in order to keep them all from uniting against their rulers. Finally, I find some of the racial politics of this zine troubling. In one instance, Melissa writes of being approached in Mexico by a man offering her several thousand dollars to drive another man across the border. For no apparent reason, her response to this is that while she doesn't "have a problem at all with giving folks rides, the thought of knowingly transporting someone who may be concealing the fact they are hauling heroin, meth, or what the fuck ever, isn't cool." Why does it automatically go to drug running? Is this what she thinks of her "companeros y companeras"? CH (Melissa • girleveryday@gmail.com)

LISTEN UP #1 • 8.5x5.5 • 48pgs

The concept for this zine is admittedly borrowed from and inspired by the amalgamation of two other zines, Anti-Matter and Chrissy Piper's Three Records. It goes like this: Mikey sits down with a friend and an I-pod and listen to five randomly selected songs and talk about whatever comes up. I like the way it leads the conversation. If you don't like where it's going, at least you know it's going to change in a minute with the next song. And then there's the voyeuristic appeal of peering into someone's closet; maybe a little giggle when the SHELTER song comes on. FIL (Mickey Nolan • 1349 N. Bell Ave. Bsm • Chicago, IL 60622)

THE MATCH #105 • 9.5x7 • 72 pgs • free/donation

Chances are good that if you're interested in anarchism and have explored it with any depth, you've probably come across an issue of The Match sometime within its near forty-year existence. Within the spectrum of zine publishing, Woodworth's well-known if not mildly revered, mostly due to The Match's longevity and the fact that every issue is still laid out, typeset and printed by hand. So, smoke-blowing aside, there's stuff that I really liked about this issue, and elements that I didn't care for. I admire Woodworth's scope, ceaselessness and ambition. I like the fact that subscriptions are free. I like the fact that The Match has probably got the most lively, intelligent letters section of any publication (mainstream or not). I like the fact that I'd be terrified to get in an argument with the guy, as he'd probably be able to dismantle my half-baked ideologies to kindling in about six seconds flat. What I don't like about this issue is that, for all of his experience, Woodworth also strikes me as a man who is right on the cusp of remaining unteachable - in the letters section I mentioned, Woodworth always gets the last word if someone refutes his ideas, which has always struck me as a little petulant for an editor to do. I don't like the fact that in "Who the Police Beat"—a fairly lengthy section that denotes specific cases of police brutality and abuse of authority—Woodworth often slips into editorializing or straight-up shoddy journalism. These minor complaints aside, both Woodworth and his bevy of contributors are doing an incredible job at pointedly attempting to dismantle various power structures (police, Islamic and Christian extremism, the entertainment industry, etc.) with the sort of depth that mainstream media ardently shies away from. Recommended. KR (Fred Woodworth • PO Box 3012 • Tucson, AZ 85702)

MY BRAIN HURTS VOL. 1 • 8.5x5.5 • 128pgs

This is a collection of the first five issues of an ongoing diy comic about high school punks growing up in NYC. It's a rollercoaster ride about being punk, being queer, and being pissed. It's about getting fucked with constantly and learning to survive and finding brief moments of hope in a world of shit. Most of all, I think, it's about an unbreakable friendship between two loveable fuckups. It's addictive and easy to get lost in. And it's punk. FIL (Microcosm Publishing • 222 S. Rogers St. • Bloomington, IN 47404 • microcosmpublishing.com)

MY LIFE IN A JUGULAR VEIN: 3 MORE YEARS OF SNAKEPIT COMICS • by Ben Snakepit

Snakepit? That's a punk name for sure since "snake pit" means an institution or organization led in an inept or inhumane way. Apply that to autobiographical comics and you see where the hilarity can begin. This is the second book anthology of Ben Snakepit's daily comics. 3 panels with the date & a song listed above. Typically the trifecta is: work

sucks; taquerias rule; & parties/shows. If that sounds boring to you, then you probably don't like the Jawbreaker song "First Step" or American Splendor comics. The 3-panel format is a strength here-- a familiar border like the waking hours or syllable-constraint of a haiku. Sure, to the non-punks, Ben's soliloquy about being "31, fat, living with my mom & working for minimum wage" will be more horrific than darkly hilarious. But the nuanced readers, to the audience of awesome shows, and for those whom payday feels like the lottery, then dig in. More so than the soap opera stuff, what I enjoyed most was the flourishes that can only happen in comics. How the party scenes are literally full of trolls, dragons & how he draws himself as a fruit or vegetable when watching too much tv. As a bonus, the book also got me thinking about the current state of punk. When J-Church arrives at the FEST here in my town, Ben draws a banner proclaiming "Cocaines-ville". I wish I could refute such things. Same with likening Bloomington to self-righteous, uptight parents. The politics of getting wasted don't ever go away, and they don't get less relevant. Do not, however, try to read this book in a single setting. It's not a story -- it's a journal in comics form. Too much and you'll have the psychedelic eyes that Ben draws after ingesting pot brownies. Plus, there's a bonus cd of referenced songs. Thanks, Ben. TF (Microcosm Publishing • microcosmpublishing.com)

NOTHING SOLID #5 • 8.5x5.5 • 14pgs • \$2 + 2 stamps

This is a zine designed in Microsoft Word with a silk-screened cover "to make up for that." I blame Stolen Sharpie Revolution for that logic. This is a "my first punk-house" story which includes all the requisite themes like messy housemates, discovering freeganism, and wanting to ride bikes more often. It's an oft told tale with the perfect ending—moving back in with the parents. FIL (Weston Czerkies • 6256 Welland Lang • Cicero, NY 13039)

PRISONERS' DILEMMA #2 SEPTEMBER 2007

• 11x14 • 42pgs • \$2

Anarchist zine that seems to have the purpose of encouraging people to think about resistance, self-defense and their relationships to the state. In this zine, you will find nebulous philosophical positions advocating self-defense and hypothetical commitments to firearms, as well as the sort of standard trashing on alienating technology, sport utility vehicles, capitalism and pigs. I find the personal writings in this zine to be lengthy and somewhat disjointed, often lacking focus and discernible purpose. I found that the interview with the two women who run Home Alive and one of the organization's volunteers is by far the most compelling piece in this issue. It's good to know that they have been going for fourteen years, providing a wide array of self-defense classes to people on a sliding-scale basis, particularly appealing to women and queer people. I feel like I've read this zine before and encourage the writers to ditch the shit about waving at babies and push towards taking what they have here and using it to develop a critical assessment of humanity as a species. As it is, this zine is pretty anthropocentric, often focused on white "radical communities" at that. Yes, government is bullshit, pigs are fucked, capitalism is organized crime, but this shit didn't come from outer space. People created it, and the ones we label as "them" are not biologically different from "us." People are the problem; some much more than others, but all this death around us came from our fellow species members. Also, stop blaming yourselves for being "complicit in the state." You don't have much of a choice unless you kill yourself. We are born into this shit. Individual withdrawal is nothing but a selfish salve. CH (Prisoners' Dilemma • PO Box 95006 • Seattle, WA 98145-2006 • prisonersdilemma@riseup.net)

PROFANE EXISTENCE # 54 • 8.5x11 • 84pgs • \$5

The highlight for me (and I hope this would be obvious to everyone else) was without a doubt the featured art of FLY. The surrounding article talks about her life in NYC and has a few comics as well. This Issue's recipe section has a focus on exotic as well as traditional latin foods. In addition to the interviews with MISCHIEF BREW, HUMAN ERROR, and INHASTE there is also an overview of 2007's CLit fest RVA. The cherry on top of the sundae is the free cd which has great tracks from bands like PARASYTIC, ISKRA, NUX VOMICA, and even GO! MT (PO Box 8722 • Minneapolis, MN 55408)

SIGHT BEYOND SIGHT #1

The first thing that comes to mind when I flip through SIGHT BEYOND SIGHT is one of my favorite zines, ANTI-MATTER. It seems like Erik is certainly hearkening back to 90's in both style and content. Pictures of some of my most beloved bands (UNBROKEN, 108, 4 WALLS FALLING) dot the pages and I see Hare Krishna and veganism mentioned more than a few times. One thing that I really appreciate about this zine, however, is that there is no "good ol' days" reminiscing or nonsense about how things "used to be so much better". SIGHT BEYOND SIGHT is solidly focused on the here and now. I also really like the section where he has a bunch of bands pick one song and give

an in depth explanation of meaning behind the lyrics. Throughout the zine there's a good mix of politics and band content interspersed with personal anecdotes and musing by the author. Features lengthy interviews with Johnithin Christ of CODE OF HONOR, THE FIRST STEP, and photographer/SHELTER roadie Dhira Krishna Dasa as well as articles on veganism, the pharmaceutical industry, and not remaining silent about the things that you believe in. SIGHT BEYOND SIGHT probably won't appeal much to folks who aren't interested in the type of hardcore that the author is, but if you are, and are frustrated with the thoughtlessness and apathy that seems to cloud that scene, this zine is highly recommended. LAL (Erik Anarchy Kaluza • Theresgate 5A • 0358 Oslo • Norway • soulfireh@gmail.com)

SLASH AND BURN #4 • 8.5x11 • 20pgs

Another issue of this cut & paste fanzine from the people at Punks Before Profits. Just two interviews this time. They continue their coverage of international hardcore with an interview with Italy's ANTI YOU and also talk to AI Quint about hardcore nostalgia. The rest is filled with a bunch of random flyers, some reviews and some writing about being punk at thirty. FIL (Punks before Profits • PO Box 1148 • Grand Rapids, MI 49501 • punksbeforeprofits@hotmail.com)

SLINGSHOT NEWSPAPER #95 HARVEST 2007

This time around, the folks over at the Slingshot collective disappoint me with their cover. It says "the world deserves better than grown-ups" with a group of kids breaking a piñata. I don't identify at all with being a child, and in fact, I'm pretty over that whole "growing up is giving up" attitude. Let's face it folks, people get older. I'm real sick of glorifying youth, no matter how evil most adults are, and no matter how people seem to grow complicit with age, the fact is, most of our lives we are adults, not kids, and nobody respects us during either position in life. I'd rather see examples of older activists still caring than see the banner waving from the arm of the idealist youth. But, still, what I love about Slingshot is its capacity for indulging the adolescent attitude. For example, in two articles announcing the next Republican National Convention and the next G8 Summit, the headline declares "Two More Chances to Fuck Up the World Empire". It's nice to see shit like that in print. Generally, Slingshot always takes the most left perspective possible. I feel like I can count on them to produce articles that won't sugar coat anything or pat anyone on the back for trying to work within the system. It's mostly about building the world you want now, in tangible

terms. In this issue, there's an article about how damaging and polluting gold mining is for local environments and communities; another article talks about an Indiana Earth First! group making efforts to block a super highway from being built from Canada to Mexico. It also covers Cop Watch tactics, Urban Gardening, and continues on a theme that seems to be covered in every issue, promoting sustainability with regard to our fossil fuel addiction. I don't like this paper just because I'm from around Berkeley, it has a wingnut flare with a fiercely analytical focus. Keep it up, y'all. JB (Slingshot Collective • The Long Haul • 3124 Shattuck Ave. • Berkeley, CA 94705)

SORRY TREES #6 • 8.5x11 • 26pgs • \$1/trade

The first thing I said when I saw this zine was, "BUTT TRUMPET is still a fucking band?!" Yes, they are and they're interviewed here along with MUNICIPAL WASTE and TOYS THAT KILL. The interviews are random and brief, offering little to no insight on the band's viewpoints or anything else really. There is also a Central and South American travel diary that is so terribly offensive that I can't believe it. I don't really give a fuck that you were hanging out with a "French chick" and you forgot her name "but she sucked anyway so it don't matter". In Cancun, the author can only seem to comment on everyone's height, referring to them as "umpa lumpas" and midgets...and that's only the beginning. It's 3 goddamn pages of cultural insensitivity, misogyny, stoned ramblings, atrocious spelling errors, and non-existent editing. The issue is rounded out with record reviews, a guide on how to be a vegetarian for a week (which reads like an ad for Morningstar Farms), clipped out Associated Press articles with no commentary or reason, random rants, and some anti-war stuff. This zine is aptly named. I'll take their suggestion in the introduction and recycle it immediately. GH (818 S George St. • York, PA.)

THREE RECORDS #1 • 8.5x5.5 • 64pgs • \$5

I instantly got excited as soon as I heard about this zine. Chrissy Piper's photography has always had a big influence on me. Her book, The Unheard Music, captured some amazing pictures of bands from the early nineties. This zine compiles a bunch of her punk portraits and asks each person to list the three records that changed or inspired their lives. Many of them go further to explain why and that makes it really fun to read, but even just seeing their three choices adds a lot of depth and character to the already endearing photos. This rules. FIL (seepiper@hotmail.com)

TRYING #5 • 5.5x4.25 • 68pgs • \$1

A personal zine filled with short anecdotes featuring a carefully hand painted cover along with hand done layout inside that has been carefully photocopied. I don't even have to summarize the general theme of the zine as the author has already done that expertly: "There comes a point when you start living for your memories. When you foresee that depressing fact as inevitable you try to make those memories as morbidly marvelous as possible." WC (dominic@bust.com)

UPHEAVAL #11 & #12 • 11x17 • 2pgs • \$1/trade/SASE

Ever wonder what bands like THE MERRIMACK BUTT PIRATES, SLIMY CUNT AND THE FISTFUCKS, and SHITFUCKER were up to? Then this record review zine is for you. WC (Craig • P.O. Box 301426 • Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 • rawpunkrock@gmail.com)

VERBICIDE #20 • 8.5x11 • 58 pgs

Ladies First issue. Fiction by Diane DiPrima and Julia Garcia Gonzales; Interviews with body-positive publisher Rachel Varla, artist Melinda Gebbie, Blonde Redhead, Joan Jett, Gorrilaz guitarist Noodles, MC Psalm One, Margaret Cho; Short essays on Wendy O. Williams, Kim Gordon, and Meshell Ndegeocello; Spotlights on new bands (all with ladies prominent); Reviews. There are also sidebars and boxes briefly describing the work of other women, including our own Katy Otto. HM (verbicide.com)

ZINE WORLD: A READER'S GUIDE TO THE UNDERGROUND PRESS #25 • 8.5x11 • 48pgs • \$4

No, the zine & small press world is not exactly the same as Give Me Back's DIY music community. However, the very first page of this fine zine reads "If you are not fully satisfied with Zine World, tough shit...the people who put this zine together work hard for no pay." The grounded, no-nonsense tone of this publication, and the multiplicity of voices makes for a quality read. Of course there's some lively letters from Fred Woodworth of the Match. There's also, understandably, much writ here about how the new postal rates are affecting us. Plus, a bounty of practical, useful reference information like a current list of zine libraries & infoshops; changes of address; upcoming events; and tips on leading zine workshops. Crucial. TF (Zine World • PO Box 330156 • Murfreesboro, TN 37133 • undergroundpress.org)

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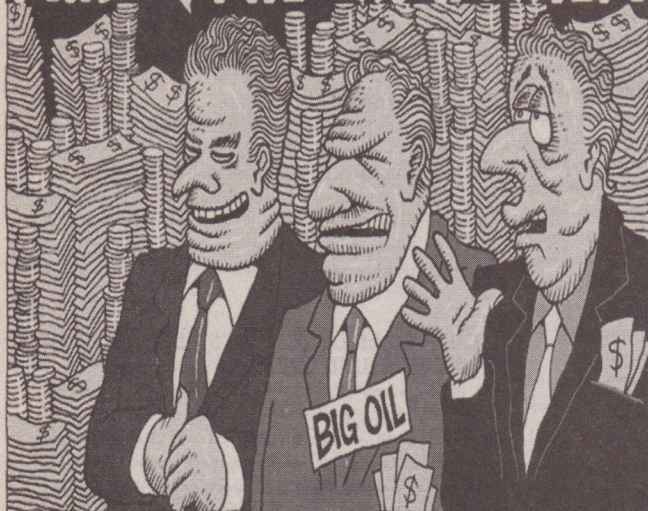
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keeping your van alive

a punk rock primer **by: brian redbeard**

you've scrounged for months to cover your rent while you'll be gone. you may have even been able to sublet your room. you've stocked up on nuts, fruit, etc. things to make sure you'll be able to get some vegan snacks when you're stuck in phoenix. you've taken care of everything you can think of... let's discuss some of the things you didn't think about though in relation to your mode of transportation.

oil changes: you have been getting them every 2,000 miles right? that's not a suggestion. it's law. i'm handing it down to you from on high. i don't care if you're mid-tour and neither will your engine. it will eat shit if you don't change the oil.

coolant: that ginormous engine in the van generates a lot of heat. especially if you're driving through a hot place, it can overheat. ALWAYS make sure you've got coolant in the engine. if you don't, it will seize up (though not exactly, think of the metal in the pistons melting together).

spare tire: do you plan on having to get the van towed just because you decided there wasn't room for the spare? this will immediately put you in the hole. just find a way to carry it, OK?

tire pressure: when driving through warm places, the air in the tires will expand. when driving through hot places, it can cause you to blow a tire. on the flip side, if your tire pressure is too low, you'll be spending too much money on gas. proper pressure is printed on the outside of the tire. figure out where yours should be and make it someone's job to check each time you stop for gas.

transmission: so when you're driving up hills, you know how the van seems to "drop gear" and the engine races? it's trying to tell you something. you're dragging 2 or 3 tons of humans, steel, & music gear up a hill. cut it some slack. if you're putting the van in gear and you hit the gas, but there is no movement, the transmission is 'slipping.' this is a bad sign. check the trans fluid and make sure you have enough, but DON'T OVER FILL!!!!

gas can: leave one in the back, it's small and gas stations overcharge.

speed: keep it at no more than 70mph. i thought this was obvious, but vans aren't designed for high speed. it kills the engine, transmission, & wastes gas. plus, you'll save more time by fucking around less at pit stops.

haynes/chilton manual: acquire one for your van (model & year) from an auto parts store. it'll tell you how to do things like change the oil, fluids, etc. plus, if you're handy it'll show you how to do simple (and not so simple) repairs.

be paranoid: lay off the manowar while driving. develop super hearing to listen for every freak noise and vibration. if something is screwy, talk to a mechanic. don't let them tell you "that's normal." you're the one who's been driving this thing, you know what "normal" is, not them.

rust: get that shit off your van. it doesn't need to look nice. some sand paper will get it off, and a \$2 can of primer will keep it from coming back. rust will eventually eat through the body. keep it under control.

junkyards: learn and love them. especially for body parts, they can be a savior. my favorite costs \$1 for general admission & i have to bring my own tools. i walk out of there with pockets full of tiny parts all the time & can get a front quarter panel for \$30 if i pull it.

fix things: i know this is obvious, but if something breaks... fix it. parts are interconnected. one failing can cause others to fail. get shit taken care of before it becomes a huge problem.

